

SEPTEMBER

25 CENTS

REDBOOK

"The Edge of Time"

A COMPLETE NOVEL BY
LOULA GRACE ERDMAN



"AN INTERESTING CONDITION"

The Revealing Diary of a Miracle in Progress

yours to live with ...
yours to love ...



...for keeps

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THE FINEST SILVERPLATE

Today—see your jeweler's fall showing of five fine patterns in ever-loved Community, the world's most popular silverplate. Price Community*—dinner services for eight places now cost as low as \$49.75 (no federal tax). Trust Community's solid silver "Overlay"—your lifetime wear-protection! And live with Community—love the sparkling hospitality of your Community-inspired table.

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Keep your Whole Mouth Wholesome!

SEPTEMBER						
SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
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September is Ipana Dental Health Month— Time for a check-up!

It's back-to-school and back-to-work this month, so be sure your family gets the right start on dental health. **1.** See your dentist now. **2.** Start using Ipana Tooth Paste. Get the big new Economy Size and save up to 23¢!

Fight tooth decay and gum troubles with the one leading tooth paste specially designed to do *both*!*

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With one famous tooth paste—*with Ipana and massage—you can guard your teeth and gums **BOTH**.

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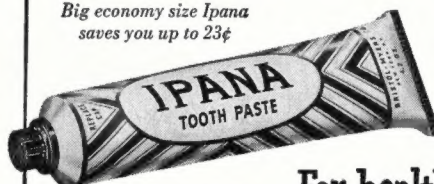
other leading tooth paste is specially designed to stimulate gum circulation—*promote healthier gums*.

Remember, Ipana is the only leading tooth paste made especially to give you this doubly-protective, doubly-effective care.

Now, today, start this *double* protection—keep your whole mouth "Ipana wholesome." You'll like Ipana's wholesome, refreshing flavor, too. Get Ipana!

NEW!

Big economy size Ipana
saves you up to 23¢



IPANA

For healthier teeth, healthier gums

A Product of Bristol-Myers

The LION'S ROAR

Published in
this space
every month



The greatest
star of the
screen!

Hey-ho! for the citronella season! Here we are in our paint-spattered jeans with a haystack behind our ear, joyfully reliving every dancing note and lovecall of that bucolic frolic, "Summer Stock".

★ ★ ★ ★

What a theme for an M-G-M musical! When Broadway goes barnstorming there's no limit to the opportunities for hilarious tuneful romance, and this Technicolor triumph positively skims the cream.

★ ★ ★ ★

Judy Garland, owner of a run-down farm, lends her barn to a troupe of acting folks, led by Gene Kelly, ambitious-but-broke producer of a musical headed for Broadway.



★ ★ ★ ★



Stirring up hornets' nests are that city clown Phil Silvers, and that country cut-up Eddie Bracken, gorgeous Gloria De Haven, rasp-voiced Marjorie Main and Ray Collins.

★ ★ ★ ★

But you can't keep a thrush like Judy down on the farm for long. Not with Gene's dancing—and dawning interest in the birds and the bees. And Judy's reciprocal interest in show business.

★ ★ ★ ★

Judy and Gene are supreme as a team and share several spectacular song-and-dance numbers. Director Charles Walters and Producer Joe Pasternak have wrought a singy, swingy musical.



The story is as fresh and warm as a new-baked pie, which George Wells and Sy Gomberg serve up piping hot!

★ ★ ★ ★

The Messrs. Gordon and Warren have culled a lush crop of songs. They're all available in the M-G-M Records Album.

★ ★ ★ ★

We could go on and on... but let's just say, if ever there was a gay and gorgeous musical to send M-G-M stock soaring, "Summer Stock" is it!

—Leo



REDBOOK VOL. 95 NO. 5 SEPTEMBER 1950

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The short stories, serial and novel herein are fiction and intended as such. They do not refer to real characters or actual events. If the name of any living person is used, it is a coincidence.

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How could he treat her this way?

HER FIRST DATE with a most attractive man . . . and here she was, back home, and on the point of tears, by half-past ten. What had she said . . . what had she done to change his eagerness to indifference? She would never know . . . didn't even suspect!

Can You Be Sure?

How dare any woman assume that her breath is always beyond reproach?

Halitosis (unpleasant breath) has a habit of cropping up when you least expect it . . . of putting you in the worst sort of light when you want to be at your best. And you, of course, may not know when you're guilty:

Isn't it foolish to risk offending when Listerine Antiseptic is such an *extra-careful*, wholly delightful precaution?

You merely rinse the mouth with it night and morning, and always before any date and, lo! your breath becomes fresher and sweeter. Moreover, it stays that way, too . . . not for seconds . . . not for minutes . . . but for hours, usually.

While some cases of halitosis are of systemic origin, most cases, say some authorities, are due to the bacterial fermentation of tiny food particles clinging to mouth surfaces. Listerine Antiseptic quickly halts such fermentation, then overcomes the odors fermentation causes.

LAMBERT PHARMACAL COMPANY, St. Louis, Missouri

Before Any Date . . . **LISTERINE ANTISEPTIC** . . . The Extra-Careful Precaution Against Offending

BETWEEN THE LINES—



Merle Miller won his reputation as a writer with "That Winter," a hardbitten novel about returning war veterans. Now, on Page 26, the young novelist reveals a different facet in "You're a Smart Kid," about a courageous youngster facing the greatest tragedy of childhood—the feeling of not being wanted. As this story of parental folly unfolds, every father and mother will be reminded again that even the best-nourished child is half starved without affectionate understanding.



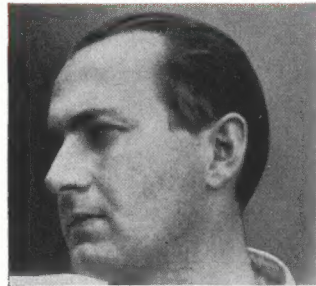
Loula Grace Erdman, 1946 Dodd, Mead-REDBOOK \$10,000 Novel Award winner, is back this month with a stirring new novel on Page 105—"The Edge of Time." Here is a story of the past with a high degree of significance for today's young moderns. After months of research including interviews with survivors of the period, Miss Erdman has written with great sympathy about the Texas homesteaders, most of them young couples, who came to the great plains before the railroads. Liv-

ing under conditions which called for incredibly hard work and courage, they asked for nothing but the chance to try. Very much in love they were, with faith in themselves and in the country. Their story is a triumph of spirit. The new novel will be published in book form by Dodd, Mead and also will be a book club selection.

Don't fail to read the fascinating diary on Page 17—"An Interesting Condition." This unique and highly valuable document, in a longer version, will be a Double-day book later this fall.



In Korea a few weeks ago a completely obscure West Virginia boy named Kenneth Shadrick raised his head to check the accuracy of his bazooka fire and in an instant became a symbol of American sacrifice in a world cause. Who was this lad whose fate it was to be the first American infantryman to fall in battle in the free people's war against Communism? His is a story of deep significance to the American people, and to get it REDBOOK asked the gifted writer, William Lindsay Gresham, (above) author of "Nightmare Alley," to talk with Private Shadrick's family and friends in the lonely hill country he left to meet a hero's death. Gresham's report, "One Boy—One World," on Page 32, holds deep meaning for all of us at a fateful hour in our history.



More and more people are recognizing the need to understand other religions as a key to their own, and with this in mind REDBOOK is presenting a series on the major religious holidays. The series opens with an interpretation of Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur on Page 34. The haunting beauty of the illustrative painting by William Pachner (above) and the quiet power of the text by Selwyn James make this an article which we sincerely hope will be read and contemplated by millions.



Just named the "Loveliest Mother" in two of New York's largest housing developments, cover-girl Jane Cartwright has found that good things come in two's. She has been on the cover of REDBOOK two times, married almost two years, alive just over two decades, but she draws the line at husbands—just one is perfect. The sleeping babe is four-weeks-old Vicki Wasserman in her first professional appearance. Negligee by Lord and Taylor. Photo by Jules and Beatrice Pinsley.

NEXT MONTH:

A distinguished author discusses today's No. 1 personal problem for millions: uneasy conscience. Don't miss GUILT, by Philip Wylie.

Through The Jungle of Human Fraillties He Walked With God

STEPHEN FERMOYLE was blessed with divine fire and the look of angels. From boyhood he wanted to become a priest, but within him raged all the pride and tumultuous passions of mankind. He was not a humble man; he had to learn humility. He knew pain and despair and misery through his years, and he had to study patience and compassion. And when his own great crisis came, he had to learn to pray.

It would have been easy for Stephen to succeed in any worldly enterprise, but his love for Him who walked in light carried him on—as curate, vicar, monsignor, bishop—finally to the fateful donning of the Red Hat. No one could have known how hard he fought, how much he suffered in his journey to the most inaccessible rooms of the Vatican.

You must not miss reading Henry Morton Robinson's "The Cardinal," for here is one of the most powerful and enriching novels ever written. No other similar book since "The Robe" has moved people so deeply. Every page will hold you spellbound, for here is a story of people good and bad, rich and poor, honest and scheming—but all vibrantly alive.

"The Cardinal" became an instant top best-seller on publication, and already more than 150,000 copies have been purchased in the publisher's regular edition at \$3.50. Now you may have *your* copy, *plus* a copy of the second book described here, as your **FREE** Membership Gift Books when you join the Family Reading Club. Read the details of this unusual offer, then mail the coupon *at once!*



The Best Sellers

An analysis based on reports from leading book sellers in 36 cities, showing the sales rating of 16 leading recent fiction titles.

Fiction

1 The Cardinal. Robinson

FREE The Cardinal

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 that brushing teeth
 right after eating with
COLGATE
DENTAL CREAM
STOPS TOOTH
DECAY BEST

**Better Than Any Other Way of
 Preventing Tooth Decay According
 to Published Reports!**

Reader's Digest for July reports on one of the most extensive experiments in dental history! And remember these additional facts: The toothpaste used *exclusively* in this research was Colgate Dental Cream. Two years' research showed brushing teeth right after eating with Colgate Dental Cream stopped tooth decay *best!* Better than any other home method of oral hygiene! The Colgate way stopped *more* decay for *more* people than ever reported in all dentifrice history!

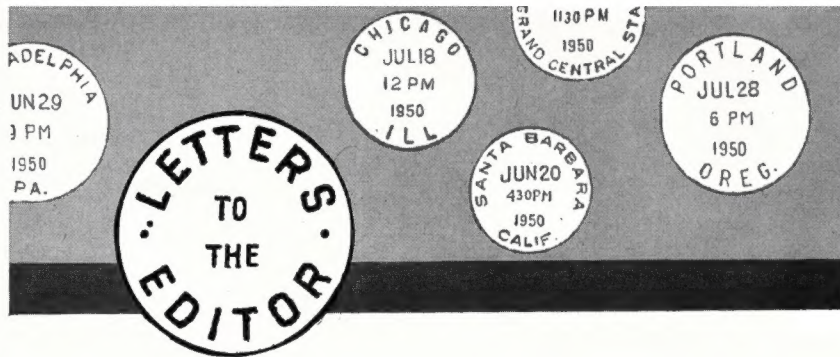
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ALWAYS USE
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 YOUR BREATH WHILE
 YOU CLEAN YOUR
 TEETH—AND HELP
 STOP TOOTH DECAY!



*YOU SHOULD KNOW! Colgate Dental Cream, while not mentioned by name, was used exclusively in the research reported in Reader's Digest.



DELAYED PILGRIMS

I just read "A Yearling Family" by John Hersey, and I am infuriated. That's one of the things wrong with the country today . . . so many foreigners coming in that a dyed-in-the-wool American doesn't have a chance. My ancestors settled the country back in the seventeen hundreds, but that doesn't do me any good now.

MRS. E. M. ALLEN
 Phoenix, Arizona

I talked with the "yearling family" the other day. Apart from the fact that small Cork Dani, when given, a pair of roller skates, proved so courageous that he soon had a broken leg, the family is fine. Mrs. Marjai-Szabo is working now, so they are saving some money at last.

JOHN HERSEY
 Westport, Conn.

REDBOOK's publication of "A Yearling Family" by John Hersey in the June issue is a real contribution to America's understanding of these new immigrants. Displaced Persons themselves will also be encouraged to find their own heartbreaks are only part of the normal process of becoming new members of the great American community.

D.P.'s have been called "Delayed Pilgrims." They come to this country as did the forefathers of even those Americans who now would like to halt immigration and keep America just for themselves.

WARNER WARTENBERG
 American Federation
 of International Institutes
 New York, N. Y.

INTELLIGENCE WITHOUT I. Q.

Finally I am getting around to letting you know how much I have been enjoying "The Psychologist's Casebook" by Dr. John Martin. His articles are extremely stimulating reading, as well as material for discussion with friends.

Thanks, too, for giving your readers a little credit for intelligence. For the first time "a quiz type" article has come out without silly questions and answers which pretend to be an "intelligence rating" of the reader. I am looking forward to more Casebooks in human relations.

MRS. ANDRES M. MORIMOTO
 Fort Lee, N. J.

THE LEFT HAND OF GOD

Never have I read a serial novel so tremendous in scope and execution as "The Left Hand of God" by distinguished-looking William E. Barrett. Reading this story is like going over Niagara Falls in a barrel — once started you can't stop. But, in reading Mr. Barrett, you don't want to stop.

JOHN ORLEANS
 San Antonio, Tex.

My sincere thanks to REDBOOK. Time was when the months flew past. Now, waiting for the next installment of "The Left Hand of God," time stands still and I am as impatient as a six-year-old on Christmas Eve.

MRS. GEORGE PEACEMAKER
 Hartford, Conn.

Al Buell's magnificent illustrations are always a pleasure to behold. His pictorial dramatization of Jim Carmody (see



cut) is both sensitive and moving, for it portrays the exact instant Jim rediscovers the power and value of faith in the Almighty.

JAMES SOLNEY
 Minneapolis, Minn.

. . . I am proud that REDBOOK considers its millions of readers mature enough to appreciate and understand William E. Barrett's stimulating analysis of the variations yet similarities between the different religions. If more people knew how similar most of them are, there would be much less conflict. Congratulations.

MRS. WILLIAM STEGNER
 Akron, Ohio



ADDRESS:

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR,

230 Park Avenue, New York 17,
New York

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LT

TAKE CARE TO HEART

With deep appreciation, I read REDBOOK's editorial on the CARE Book Fund Program. Right now, approximately \$160,000 worth of books are en route to foreign educational institutions, in part as a result of REDBOOK's help.

Letters of thanks streaming back attest the good-will these books are spreading.

PAUL COMLY FRENCH
Executive Director, CARE

■ Contributions may be made by check or money-order to CARE Book Fund, 20 Broad Street, New York 5, N. Y. —ED.

SHADES OF ABNER DOUBLEDAY

I struggled for ten years to convince my wife I know baseball. Now you have undone all my work. Please tell her your definition of a "clothesline drive" is incorrect.

JOE EYLER, Sports Editor
LaPorte (Ind.) Herald-Argus

Thanks for your nice article on my broadcasts of the New York "Yankees" baseball games. But I'd like to say that your definition of a "clothesline drive" should have been: A batted ball hit on a straight line to any sector of the playing field.

MEL ALLEN
New York, N. Y.

■ Mel Allen says Mrs. Joe Eycler can believe her husband an expert on the "clothesline drive." —ED.

STREAMLINED GRANDMA

Have Jane Whitbread and Vivian Cadden (authors of "A Visit from Grandma") ever heard of such svelte grandmothers as Marlene Dietrich, Constance Bennett, or Gloria Swanson? They and other 1950-model grandmothers make the "granny" of your article as obsolete as an antimacassar.

As one of this new species, I'm fed up with stories of home-wrecking grandmothers. Most of us are far too busy to find time for "interfering" in the lives of our children or grandchildren. The motto of the modern grandmother is "Love them — and leave them."

MRS. J. HILTON LECH
Yarmouth, Nova Scotia



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Elizabeth Arden
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Shy and sensitive, *Laura* (Jane Wyman) sought refuge in her collection of glass animals until a casual "gentleman caller" (Kirk Douglas) opened up a new world to her.



"The Glass

REDBOOK'S PICTURE
OF THE MONTH
—SELECTED
BY FLORENCE SOMERS

Tennessee Williams' play "The Glass Menagerie," which won the New York Drama Critics' Award, makes an unusual film. It is a character study of a family, and it is so well acted that the audience is immediately captured and held by the emotions, frustrations and hopes of the four principals.

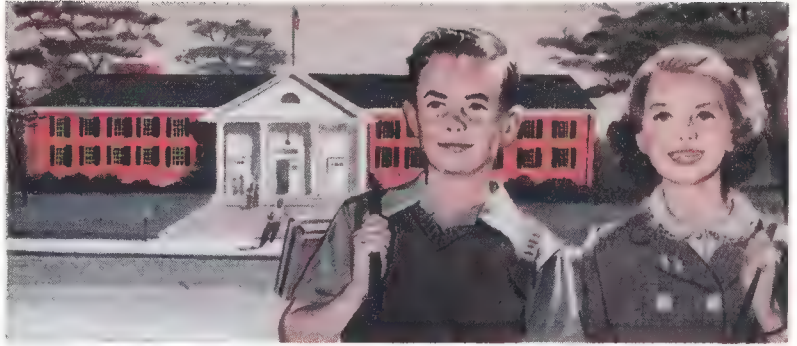
The story revolves about *Laura* (Jane Wyman), the crippled daughter, a shy soul who lives in a world of fantasy, surrounded by the glass animals she worships. Her mother is *Amanda Wingfield* (Gertrude Lawrence), an ambitious, middle-aged woman who struggles to keep the family going on the money contributed by her son *Tom* (Arthur Kennedy), and on the little she earns selling magazine subscriptions. She has romantic memories of her girlhood as a Southern belle, and she wants desperately to give *Laura* the same happiness.

When *Tom* finally arranges to bring a friend home to meet *Laura*, *Amanda* makes great plans for the evening, not realizing how terrified *Laura* is at the prospect of meeting a stranger. The "gentleman caller" (Kirk Douglas) turns out to be a secret love of *Laura's*. He breaks through her shyness and convinces her that she can dance and can take part in social activities. Then he senses *Laura* is falling in love with him, and he tells her he is engaged. As cruel as this blow is, *Laura* is left with new confidence, and as the film ends she and her mother anxiously await a new caller.

The strength and appeal of "The Glass Menagerie" lie in the fact that the people are so real. Their emotions are valid and honest. Their troubles evoke sympathy and understanding from any audience. Their vivid presentation in "The Glass Menagerie" makes it a film that will linger in your memory. (Warner Brothers)

For Three Other Fine Films
Turn to Page 10

Menagerie"



FOR A HEALTHIER, SAFER SCHOOL YEAR

Twenty-four million American children will return to school this fall. Three million other boys and girls will enter for the first time. Good health is important to the school progress of them all. So each child should have a health examination by his doctor and dentist before school opens, if school authorities do not provide such check-ups.

Medical and Dental Examinations.

Recent studies show that many children have defects that may interfere with their school progress—such as eye and ear impairments and dental disorders. These and other conditions may exist for some time before being suspected by parents. Your doctor and dentist can usually detect them early and prescribe proper treatment. *If defects are discovered, they should be corrected promptly.*

Protection Against Disease: Since 1900 there has been a reduction of about 95 percent in mortality from the common childhood diseases, due largely to immunization. Even if your child has already been immunized, your doctor may recommend additional inoculations when the child enters school.

Good Health Habits. According to a recent survey, colds cause about one half of all school absences due to sickness. Doctors believe that children who are well nourished and who get plenty of sleep, rest, relaxation and exercise are less likely to be troubled by colds

and their complications. These good health habits may also help make the child more resistant to other illnesses.

Good Safety Habits. Accidents outnumber every other cause of death among school-age children. According to the National Safety Council, two out of five accidental deaths in the 5 to 14 year age group were the result of motor vehicle accidents. Many of these fatal accidents occurred on the way to or from school. So, safety authorities recommend that all children learn and observe these precautions:

1. Cross streets only at crossings
2. Obey traffic signals
3. Look both ways before stepping into the street
4. Face traffic when it is necessary to walk on a road

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Three Other Fine Films—



"UNION STATION"

There's certainly a good deal more going on in a railroad station than meets the eye. At least there is in "Union Station." Willie Calhoun (William Holden) is in charge of the station police and he becomes involved in a kidnaping when Joyce Willecombe (Nancy Olson) reports seeing armed passengers on her train. As it turns out, the men had kidnaped her employer's blind daughter (Allene Roberts).

Calhoun and police inspector Donnelly (Barry Fitzgerald) work together on the case in an endeavor to solve it before the girl is killed. All clues sooner or later lead to Union Station where every other bystander seems to be a cop. It takes the combined efforts of all of them to outwit the criminals in this fast chase which will keep you on the edge of your seat. (Paramount)



"DESTINATION MOON"

For centuries men have dreamed of making a trip to the moon but the possibilities of such a journey have probably never been so well depicted as in "Destination Moon." The film, in Technicolor, is carried out with such imagination and careful detail that it makes the whole idea seem perfectly plausible. A cartoon sequence clearly explains the flight.

Jim Barnes (John Archer) is the industrialist who gets the rocket ship produced and who leads the group of four men who make the trip. They go through some weird experiences which have their funny moments. There's great fascination in the scenes on the moon as well as in those during the flight through space. The suspense created by the difficulties of making the return trip provides an exciting climax to this unusual film. (Eagle-Lion)

Best Bets in your Neighborhood

Broken Arrow—Beautiful film in Technicolor of an exciting episode between a great Indian chief and the early settlers. Jimmy Stewart, Jeff Chandler, Debra Paget. *August

Crisis—Dramatic story of a doctor who is forced to save the life of a dictator knowing it may mean his own wife's death. Cary Grant, Jose Ferrer.

The Flame and the Arrow—Burt Lancaster swinging through the air like Douglas Fairbanks, Sr., in a colorful, swashbuckling story.

The Furies—Striking photography distinguishes this film of a struggle for power between a father and daughter. Barbara Stanwyck, Walter Huston.

In a Lonely Place—Humphrey Bogart in a powerful, emotional story played against a Hollywood background. *July

Kind Hearts and Coronets—A distant relative manages to inherit a dukedom by slightly nefarious means in an amusing film in which Alec Guinness plays eight rôles.

Louisa—Teenagers aren't half so up-setting to the family household as a grandmother who has not one but two ardent swains. Spring Byington, Edmund Gwenn, Charles Coburn, Ronald Reagan. *August

The Men—Stanley Kramer produces another outstanding film, this one an inspiring story of the paraplegics. Marlon Brando, Teresa Wright. *July

The Next Voice You Hear—What happens to the world when God's voice speaks on the radio for six successive nights. An unusual theme which makes a provocative picture. James Whitmore, Nancy Davis. *August



"THREE LITTLE WORDS"

As nimble as ever, Fred Astaire gets good support in his latest film. First of all, there's attractive, agile Vera-Ellen to keep in step with him. For laughs, there are Red Skelton and Keenan Wynn. For beauty, there's lovely Arlene Dahl. And for music, there are the famous songs of Kalmar and Ruby, such tunes as the title song, "I Wanna Be Loved by You," "Thinking of You," and others.

All this adds up to an agreeable picture which will entertain you and not tax your thinking powers. There's not space to describe the backstage and offstage shenanigans of the Kalmar and Ruby writing team (Astaire and Skelton) but their thwarted attempts to be, respectively, a magician and a ball-player add some humorous scenes to the picture. Just take our three little words for the film, "go see it." (MGM)

Pretty Baby—Betsy Drake figures out a trick to get a seat in the subway and thereby wreaks havoc with an advertising agency. Edmund Gwenn, Dennis Morgan. Zachary Scott. *August

Sunset Boulevard—Gloria Swanson may win an award for her excellent performance in this brilliant satire of movie life. William Holden, Nancy Olson, Erich von Stroheim. *August

Three Secrets—Eleanor Parker, Patricia Neal and Ruth Roman anxiously await the rescue of a boy from a mountain top as each believes she may be the child's mother. *August

The White Tower—The best-selling novel of a group of international mountain climbers, told in handsome color shots of the Alps. Glenn Ford, Valli.

*Previously reviewed in Redbook

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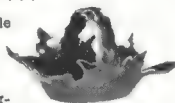
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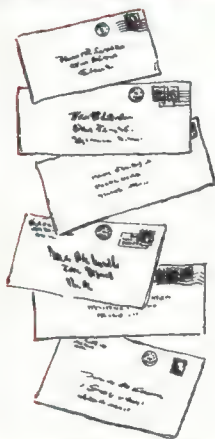
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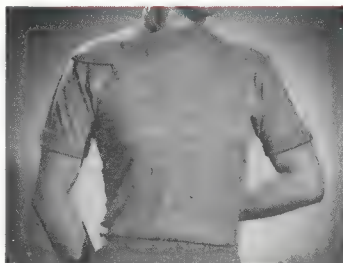
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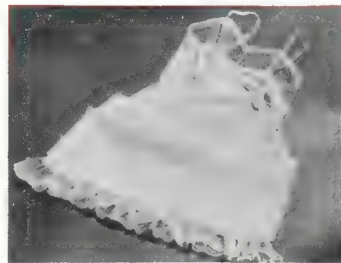


September's here — summer's at its end. School is reopening, both the family wardrobes and the house seem to need some refurbishing, and your social activities have suddenly multiplied. Time to sit down with paper and pen and shop the easy way — by mail — through **TOPS IN THE SHOPS.**

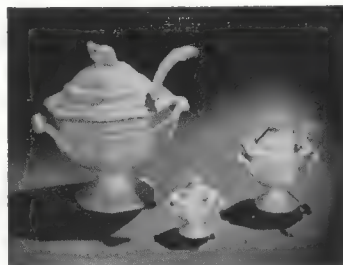
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For the hobbyist— a comprehensive book on hand decorating with hundreds of original designs for every craft. Step by step illustrated instructions for textile painting, leather and metal tooling, glazing, silk screening, glass and metal etching, wood burning, block printing, etc. \$3 ppd. From Homecrafts, 799 Broadway, New York 3, N. Y.

THE SHOPS

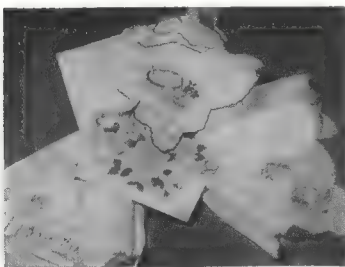
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Slicker set and sou'wester completely protects a youngster from driving rain or snow. Pint-size copies of the New England fisherman's suits are equally beguiling on girls or boys. Two-piece rubber rain suit in either red or yellow comes in sizes 2 to 10 and costs \$6.95 ppd. Matching hat is \$1.75. Johnny Appleseed's, North Beverly, Mass.



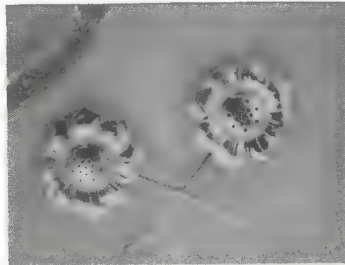
Dollar gift of the month for any one who smokes. It's an amusing little aluminum ash tray, 2 1/4" high, that is a near-perfect replica of a real ash can. Open the hinged cover and a cigarette rest pops into view. A most practical receptacle for butts and ashes. \$1 each, ppd. From Miles Kimball Co., 22 Algoma Blvd., Oshkosh, Wis.



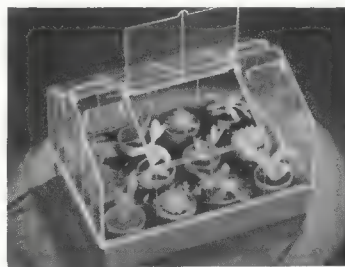
Happy birthday hankies make sentimental but inexpensive presents when birthdays pop up on your calendar pad. Imported from Switzerland, they're made of sheer white lawn with embroidered designs in color. Handkerchief with remailer—greeting folder and envelope—is 85¢ ppd. or 3 for \$2.50. Elron, 800 N. Clark St., Dept. RH, Chicago 10, Ill.



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TOPS IN THE SHOPS

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 13



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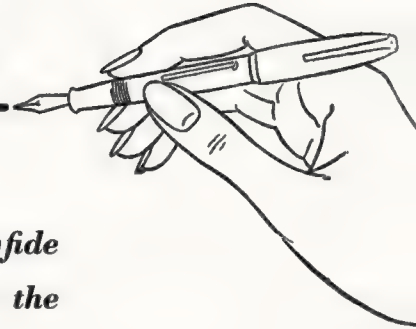
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An Interesting Condition



*Only a modern, young woman would confide
—even to her diary—this honest story of the
nine months she carried her first child*

BY ABIGAIL LEWIS

Great human documents are concerned with universal experience. And it is a truly basic aspect of life itself which the following report covers, for this is the diary of a pregnant woman.

The identity of this woman is concealed in the pseudonym above, but her character—and much about the fears and hopes of every woman who becomes a mother—are revealed in this remarkable journal.

Offering much that is familiar to mothers, this document is also especially recommended for young childless wives and for all men—who will find in it the possibility of new understanding of their womenfolk. At its start, this diary exposes a woman afraid to live. Her final triumph in the new life born of herself is the oldest and truest story of mankind.

THE EDITORS

June 13—How time flies. Already it is almost two years since Nick and I were married, in the summer following that hectic spring when I was told I could never bear a child. I had been suffering from attacks of intense abdominal pain all during my last year at college, and finally two doctors decided to operate. I escaped only because no one knew exactly what was wrong with me, and a third doctor told me that he thought that time would heal me. Nick and I were married on the strength of that hope. It has been a long, slow healing, but if what I suspect is true, I am cured. Something that I have never considered seriously has become a possibility. I think I am pregnant.

July 10—Waiting. What a terrible, suspended kind of living! And yet I cannot bring myself to take the test that would make me sure. The thought of pregnancy is like a sore spot I cannot bear to touch. I cannot accept it. I had too many plans, too much work to do. I am now in the middle of a chemistry course; I had hoped to try for an M.A. in zoology this fall. I am just beginning to make some money with my ceramic sculpture. And Nick is very busy with a new job.

July 22—Oh, I am unprepared for this in so many ways. It was difficult enough to get married after having watched the breakup of my parents' marriage. A divorce is hard on chil-

dren; they are hurt before they are old enough to understand what has happened to them. I had hoped that with time, and in Nick's gentle company, I might unlearn my distrust of marriage. But now there isn't much time. Not if this thing is true. Eight months at best.

July 31—For the past two weeks I have been feeling ill during the afternoon lab. Well, that's it. That's all, brother! Bother.

August 11—Vacation being only a week away, I finally went up to see the doctor. The uterus is definitely swollen. Still, it might be something else . . . and yet, I know it's not. But I cannot bring myself to tell Nick.

August 22—To tell Nick, in the state I am in, is impossible. For one thing, I am still hoping that it will somehow prove to be not true. Also, I have a kind of grievance against him, not as the author of my state, but because I know he will be glad. Glad! Well, that is well enough for *him*, but the pain and the work will be all *mine*.

How long will it take him to notice something unusual about my drinking milk, missing periods, refusing to buy new clothes? It has become a kind of game, to see how many hints I can give him without having him guess the truth.

August 25—Back from vacation. No, I couldn't tell Nick. I just stayed out of all those lovely Cape Cod breakers and tried not to think about it. But now in this place, it all comes back. Where would we even put a baby?

The apartment is a tiny railroad flat, three flights up. Only the windows in the front room open on the street, and the light filters back through the kitchen, which is also my studio, a short hall and bathroom, until it ends in the perpetual gloom of bedroom. But no one goes into the bedroom anyway, except to sleep; a bed and a bureau fill it completely. The rest of the apartment is similarly crowded, and there are roaches everywhere.

Perhaps I am too complaining. Our environment is much like that of thousands of other Americans. When I was married, I thought—Love in a Furnished Room, with no possessions to distract you! What sweeter, more intimate beginnings for a marriage? Poverty and doing without will

*I keep waking Nick up
in the middle of the night
to have him feel the
kicking inside my tummy.*

toughen us, bring us together. But it is something else to live like that for nearly two years. I had not realized that in poverty there is no privacy.

And two newly-married people are trying to build not only a relationship, but a home. That is the difference between having an affair and being married. The inner emotion must have a medium in which to express itself; as the caterpillar spins its cocoon from within itself, as the duck furnishes her nest with feathers plucked from her own breast, so a marriage builds its house, as a delicate extension of itself.

August 29—I take a delight in deviling Nick, saying how I dislike children, or rather babies. We get very cool and bitter about it, which is uncomfortable in so small a space. One cannot really have a satisfactory blow-up, relieving quarrels, in a three-room apartment. All that happens is that I move out into the other room to sleep, though I feel much more like taking a long walk. So many nights I spend on the daybed, now. But it hurts to be away from Nick. I can't sleep without my husband's arm under my head.

September 2—More nights on the daybed. Why did this thing have to come between us? Weren't we sufficient to one another? I suppose I feel that a child will always come between us.

September 4—Our good friend David to supper. Not much of a place to invite any but our closest friends, but David is wonderfully forbearing. And I do like to cook. After all, it's an art, which housecleaning can hardly be said to be, and it is nice to be complimented on my cooking.

September 10—That time that I had thought so distant is here; I have seen the doctor, and my pregnancy is no longer a suspicion, but a fact.

"I've reserved a room at the hospital for the 13th of March," I said to Nick. It was the least emotional way I could think of putting it. He put his arms around me, and seemed so happy that suddenly I was glad too; happy for him, happy for having told him. And later, the words came more easily.

"How do you feel?" Nick asked.

"Fine, but it's such a complication. And just when my work was beginning to go well. . . ."

"People manage. We'll learn to manage."

A lengthy discussion of ways and means, and then I asked abruptly, "I suppose you want a boy?"

"Well, I suppose most men do. I don't really care, though."

"I do. I want a red-haired girl."

September 17—Leafing through my embryology book. . . . By now, the fetus is a little over three months along, and has pretty much finished organizing itself. From now on, it will be chiefly occupied with increasing its size. I am a little

disappointed to find that most of the important stages are already over, and whether it is going to be a boy or a girl, a monster or normal, has long since been decided.

September 20—Oh, but why . . . why? I have created things before, but this creature will have consciousness. One day it will learn to ask "why?" for itself. What will I say to it?

September 28—Finally sallied forth to get maternity clothes. It seems silly to get them now, when I don't "show," but if I waited, I'd have to face myself in those triple mirrors. I am astonished to find that the baby is so invisible. Tried at first to get the cheapest maternity clothes, but what I could carry off with a slim figure won't do now; a cheap dress will just look shoddy when I start to look pretty second-hand myself. I decided to get well-cut things, finally, even though they cost more. But they are also more concealing. It hurts my sense of economy to pay much for clothes that will only be worn a few months.

The green plaid dress (\$10.95) is of a thin wool, but heavy wool would be such a bore when I'm feeling heavy myself. I also bought a black gabardine suit with a loose jacket for \$20. It is wonderfully concealing, and looks well on me. It can be worn afterward, too, because it doesn't look obviously like a maternity dress. Two wrap-around house-dresses and a smock will, I hope, complete my wardrobe. I won't be going out a lot, and anyway, I expect to be able to wear many of my normal clothes for another two months. And I don't think I'll need maternity bras or a corset, so my wardrobe costs well under \$50.

The only other thing I'd like is a flossy negligee, but I couldn't find any cut to provide for the Pregnant Figure.

September 29—I am told that my weight should increase at about two pounds a month. Or rather that the weight of the fetus should. However, I find it difficult not to put on a little weight of my own. The doctor startled me at one point. Quite casually, he asked, "Has it begun to move yet?" I replied that I thought not. But tonight, lying in bed, I realize that what I thought was gas is lower down, more definite. . . . A small, uncontrolled, irritated motion. Even this faint but definite proof of life is rather awesome.

October 12—Well, anyway, life isn't entirely dreadful here. Where else could you meet such interesting people? Burglars and jazz musicians and door-to-door salesmen. Today it was a lad who wanted to photograph me or any of my family. And I discovered again the curious truth that it is easier, sometimes, to tell a stranger about your personal problems than it is to tell your friends. Anyway, to my surprise, I found myself mentioning my pregnancy quite casually to him, although I haven't yet been able to tell David or Liz, my ex-college roommate, or Mother. His calm reaction made me realize that it is, after all, quite a normal thing, though after he left I felt rather disturbed at having so casually revealed a so-personal secret.

October 14—We have been answering ads for apartments for several weeks now, and even put in a couple of want ads of our own, but the results are discouraging. It is bad not to be able to afford a decent place to live, but it is exceptionally irritating to be able, now, to afford to pay a reasonable rent and not be able to find an apartment to pay it for. We've learned to live in this apartment by breathing like yogis and not making any sudden moves. A baby can hardly be expected to do likewise.

October 26—One of those breathlessly beautiful autumn days. Nick and David and I spent the afternoon wandering around Central Park. I have known David almost as long as I have known Nick; he came to visit us right after our honeymoon. And sometimes it makes me wonder if marriage really makes you know anyone better; I know more of Nick's idiosyncrasies, but I don't know if I really know Nick any better than I know David . . . meaning, sometimes not at all.

At last, in the dusk, we meandered off to a bar.

"Shall we tell him?" I whispered to Nick.

"It's up to you," he muttered, being somewhat tired of the question.

So we finally asked David if he was interested in becoming a godfather, and he reacted with very gratifying astonishment, considering that I am about five months pregnant! His astonishment and pleasure did strange things to us. In

a few minutes, we suddenly became Proud Potential Parents, impossible to divert from the subject of our remarkable accomplishment! For the first time, I am beginning to look forward to this a little.

October 28—The little gods have not entirely left us! We have found an apartment. Two rooms and bath upstairs, kitchen and living-room with fireplace downstairs, and *its own little yard*, with three ailanthus trees and four privet bushes. The tenants are moving out because they are having a baby, and think it is too small! I suppose size is a matter of comparison. We will move early in December. I am delirious with joy.

November 1—Nick's birthday. When he was born, he weighed three and a half pounds and was the color of an eggplant. Queer to think of now, when he is a massive chap of twenty-six, already slightly bald. But this child will be larger than he was, I think. It is becoming more conspicuous, certainly, and I realize I will have to start telling people. It is so hard. And I think nothing is so dull for your non-pregnant friends as a woman who is "going to have a baby" for seven or eight months.

Least of all, for some reason, do I want to tell our families. We don't see much of them, except for Mother, who is a few blocks away. The others all live in various suburbs. I am planning to put it off until Christmas, if possible.

November 3—My brother, wandering up on one of his rare visits, came upon us in one of my more disheveled evenings—in a housedress, with no concealing jacket. Looking at me critically, as only a younger brother can, he observed, "You ought to stand up straighter. Anyone would think you were pregnant."

The opportunity was too good to resist. His immediate reaction, in a rather squeaky voice, was: "Help, I'm going to be an uncle!"

But as a medical student, he was more calmly interested. We discussed fetal heartbeat, when it begins to move, and so on.

I think my brother has never before realized that I am a woman. And he was especially disturbed because I told him not to tell Mother. O little brother, what a child you are . . . what children we once were together!

November 4—Its movements are becoming much more definite now. I keep waking Nick up in the middle of the night to have him feel the kicking inside my tummy. Whereupon the movement stops instantly. I suppose it is nice for a father to have such a soothing effect on his child, but the chief effect at first was that Nick didn't really believe me. However, the baby seems to be gaining control of its limbs, and now there are definite, hard little taps, usually in a series. Apparently it is more difficult for a young organism to stop moving once it has begun than it is to start. Even Nick can feel these motions now, and the phenomenon reduces him to a meditative, "Ah!"

November 15—Mother has finally found out for herself. Cornering me on one of my flying visits to her household, she asked, "What's all that?"

"All what?" I said, as innocently as possible.

She patted my stomach. "All this."

"Oh, well . . ." I said, and confessed.

She was more pleased than I had expected, and said she had been dying to be made a grandmother, which rather surprised me.

November 20—It is strange to think that this child will never see the place where it was begotten. Almost two years of married life we will leave here; there is no continuity in modern life, no family mansion against whose unchanging walls we can measure our lives. Yet I am glad to move, happy to have something to do that will break up my brooding.

December 1—Beginning to feel pretty clumsy. I'm glad this moving isn't going to happen any later.

December 10—Moved.

The place has been in a terrible litter for three days. If any man thinks of his life as being a logical thing, moving in a straight line, I suggest he do a little spring cleaning and read some of his old letters, look at some of his mementos. I thought my life had been pretty inevitable so far; looking through all my accumulated odds-and-ends, I find a thou-

sand pathways I never followed any farther, dozens of people whom I never see now.

I feel as if we were tying off a portion of our old life. A house conditions your psychology. Now the horizon has enlarged a little; we have taken a step up the economic ladder, and acquired a place a little more congenial to us. Surely we will change a little, too. We are no longer newlyweds. We are putting out roots. One's center of gravity transfers fast; as Nick came in the house door with the last load, I lit a fire of wrapping paper in our own fireplace, set the table with the ham and potato salad I had prepared the night before, and was already thinking of this as "home."

December 12—It is a sweet (the only word for it) house. But it is an uneasy sensation, moving to a larger place. My motions, I find, are still cramped from long habit, and there are whole areas in this house that I have not learned to use.

December 13—There is nothing like a new house for refreshing one's outlook. I think, if I concentrate on it, I can make this house have a whole furnishing of positive new associations. For instance, it will not be so hard to get used to the idea of a baby when there is a room already set aside for it, if I don't fill it full of black thoughts first. If I keep thinking, there will be a baby here, and here, maybe I will get used to the idea, and the house will be continually saying, "Yes, a baby," instead of, as in the other place, "No, no—not a baby!"

December 19—Christmas comes on at such a pace. Season of parties—and my condition seems to affect my tolerance. One drink can keep me happy for a long, long time.

It is hard to walk on snowy streets when you are pregnant, because the changed center of balance demands that you walk bent a little backward, and the slipperiness of the snow demands that you walk a little forward. It is nice to have a husband to hold onto.

December 24—And at last . . . over the Pulaski Highway, and through New Jersey we go, to see my father. He's married again, and with two young children of his own.

His wife, who is pretty and rather young, was somewhat sensitized to pregnancy, having gone through it recently, and perceived my condition more quickly than most people have. Not when I stood, she said, but when I sat. I bow to the truth of her observation. No matter how trim one may look when standing, there is a certain unmistakable caution when one is lowering oneself into a chair.

Anyway, I began to realize the advantage of having a father with new children; they told us of all the things they could lend us.

December 25—Christmas Day, from long custom, we spent at Mother's. One thing she can always do superbly is construct a festive day. The piles of gaudy packages, the dog with a bow on his collar, the victrola booming out Brahms and Mozart, the packages of holly and real yams from an old family retainer, the fruitcake from our uncle, my brother and sister bounding with excessive festivity . . . these were the same, these had survived the changing years, war and college. Christmas has always been for me one of those strange days when happiness, sadness and change are all mixed up almost unbearably. I wouldn't miss it for anything.

Mother gave us tiny shirts, dresses, nightgowns, sweaters and a blanket. They made the baby seem so frighteningly real. We had no idea that babies were so tiny, either. One shirt is just about glove-size for Nick's big hand.

January 3—The day after Christmas, we gave a party of our own—a sort of house-warming, during which those of our friends who did not already know became acquainted with my condition. It helps, too, to find out that not everyone expects you to be all dewy-eyed.

February 3—Time is a curious sensation conditioned by many things, and for this reason a woman's sense of time must be quite different from a man's. She connects directly to the source of time, and the moon that pulls the tides around the world also pulls the hormone-tide within her; her months are marked off without need of calendar. She carries her months, her years, her spring and winter, within herself.

How much this internal sense of time is heightened in pregnancy! Were I to lose consciousness for a month, I could still tell that an appreciable amount of time had passed

by the increased size of the fetus within me. In the curious, slowed-down world of the pregnant woman, time assumes new meanings. She is—pardon the pun—in *hormony* with her universe.

February 7—Dull weather. I've been fretting for the past two days. Happening to see myself with not much else on but my long underwear, I notice that my profile is remarkably like Mr. Pickwick's.

February 8—I realize I haven't said much about the chief problem of pregnancy—diet. The hunger of pregnancy seems to be excessive, since I have been putting on an extra two pounds every month, and yet I can't cut down without being ravenous. I've been living on butterless vegetables, saccharin, liquids to give that filled feeling, but still the weight goes on. The only appetite curber I know, and one that works only in the most introspective moments, is to think, *THIS* shrimp, if I eat it, will become a part of Me (or this cup-cake or French-fried potato or pale green sherbet). Worst of all is the craving for sweets. I have invented a dessert, however, to satisfy this craving. A small can of evaporated milk, if very cold, will whip pretty well; and to this I add saccharin dissolved in a teaspoon of vanilla, and nutmeg and cinnamon to taste. When frozen, it is not too unlike ice cream, and much less caloric.

February 9—Probably it is the result of the long gray days outside and the nice warm hormones inside, but I am beginning more and more to turn inward. And so I am happy and at peace to be able to meditate. Oh, the long thoughts of these mornings. The blessed feeling of not having to have remunerative thoughts, but being simply able to drift! . . .

A sad thing has happened, which I am only just now beginning to be able to accept. Ernest, the cat, has disappeared. It has been over a week now. The lure of the outdoors was just too great for him, I guess. I miss his warm little body on my feet at night.

February 10—Only about a month more. My back aches, now, at night, and I'm beginning to feel there really isn't room for both of us inside my rib-cage. But I must say I've suffered very little from most of the normal ills of pregnancy. Whenever I've been unusually active, or have eaten the wrong things during the day, the baby remonstrates at night with violent, indignant motions, and once I thought it was planning to turn around altogether, when what I take to be its feet disappeared from under my ribs for a couple of hours.

February 11—I'm glad I happened to have the greater part of my pregnancy fall in the winter. Every woman who wants to have a child should, I think, take into consideration which time of year suits her best and plan to have the latter part of her pregnancy fall there, if possible.

Recently, I've been considering how many subtle changes in the relationship between man and wife are brought about by the birth of a child. I do not know if the love in our home will be as calm as formerly. We are no longer alone; there will be a third person intimately allied with us. Nick will be a father as well as my lover, and there will be times when we won't be able to allow our quarrels to work themselves out, because we will be trying to maintain a peaceful atmosphere for our child.

February 12—Last night Nick and I were angry at each other, and, not being able to sleep, I went downstairs to read, until he complained angrily down the hallway how long was this going on, because *he* could not sleep! How strange men are. If their wives happen to be ill, or despairing, or unable to sleep, it occurs to them only to complain because *their* sleep is spoiled!

Men are essentially the most conservative of creatures. Though they pay lip-service to the idea of equality of women, let the wife not wash the dishes one night, because she is busy with her own work, and they are immediately furious. It is nice for her to have her little interests, and bring in a little pin-money, but let her become really absorbed in her work, or very successful, and they become indignant and distant, and demand that their socks be darned.

Nick comes into the kitchen and backs out as if he had just stepped on a toad, exclaiming that the floor is just filthy. Of course it is. I had rather hoped he would notice it, and volunteer to wash it of his own accord, because there happen to be a couple of feet in my ribs that keep me from bending

over. He replies that he has heard that scrubbing floors is good for pregnant women.

February 16—What I chiefly resent is that, having taken twenty-five years to get used to and be able to enjoy sex, now for three months I will be bereft of this great privilege of adulthood. To say nothing of Nick. You become accustomed to expressing your deepest emotions through it, learn to let yourself become completely close to your very own mate—and then suddenly all the well-trained instincts find themselves blocked and disconsolate. And so all our quarrels, deprived of their proper reconciliation, peter out into glum by-gones:

"Would you like a glass of warm milk before you go to bed, Nick?"

"Oh, no, thanks. I wouldn't think of troubling you."

"Oh, that's all right, it's no trouble. . . ."

And so I have finally washed the kitchen floor.

No more frustrated and lonely period can exist between man and wife, when they are closer, yet farther apart, than ever before.

February 17—Took Nick up to meet the doctor, which he hasn't done before. He becomes rather stiff and pompous, confronted with a doctor; certainly, men don't take to doctors as easily as women do. They don't like to hand their physical problems over to someone else, and don't seem to get that luxurious feeling of Being Cared For. The hospital did not seem to interest Nick at all; he lapsed into a rapt contemplation of a magazine, while I went up to get my red blood count.

February 19—The problem of where to live with a child is beginning to haunt me. Children seem to be getting more and more out of gear with modern living. A life geared to work outside the home, with small apartments and spotless modern furniture, cocktails, brisk friends and frozen dinners, is a life in which children cannot participate much. The city way of living has made children a distinct social and economic handicap, and sooner or later Nick and I will have to find some other kind of solution; this place is too small for an active child. But our tastes are geared to this city. Our friends, the museums, the foreign movies that are our favorite recreation, are all here.

How the methods of raising children have changed! As Mother says resignedly, "Well, I could tell you about feeding schedules, and give you some little knitted suits, but I understand that's all passé now, and the modern baby wouldn't be seen dead in a knitted suit."

February 22—We spent the night with Nick's father, and when I got up the next morning, I found them looking at old pictures of his family. Seeing those pictures, I realized that when you have children, you find you have married your husband's whole family. The genetic grab bag for your child has doubled . . . or, since both Nick's parents and mine are from quite dissimilar backgrounds, quadrupled. So many genes are inherited independently that a baby has almost all its ancestry to draw on, and there is no real reason why it should resemble its father and mother at all.

Well, I can but hope. Naturally, I hope the baby will be something like us, and will find the same things funny and the same activities pleasant, but I begin to see that it is by no means as likely as I thought. . . .

Wild depression in the evening. How difficult it is to truly reach anyone, how basically and bitterly and permanently we are all alone! Love is the only thing that begins to bridge the gap between human beings, but, looking at photographs of Nick as a child, I realize how much of him is strange to me, how much of him belongs solely to himself, and how much of the child will belong to this alien part of him, too.

February 23—I am suddenly glad Nick and I are not going to be a childless couple. I don't exactly blame people who could have children but don't, but I think they've failed to answer a challenge, and they may find their lives empty and inadequate accordingly. . . .

February 24—Such a turning and kicking and pushing as went on all last night! The little demon kept me awake for hours. Just wait till it gets out where I can get my hands on it!

February 25—Pregnancy isn't exalting, as it's supposed to be. I feel very practical; I suppose it's the effect of coming up against an inescapable reality. Today it came time

to test the reality of the baby, and I went up to be X-rayed for the first time.

The X-ray technician kept telling me to hold still, to hold my breath, but the baby, apparently excited by all this attention, leapt like a porpoise; two of the pictures had to be taken again. It was quite late before I got away, and then we had to rush out to the suburbs to pick up some baby things from my father.

We are trying to keep the baby's equipment down to necessities. So far, we have a bassinet, scales, a bathinette, a place for medicines and diapers, a collection of woolly clothes and shirts for everyday, and a few dresses for show-off. Also blankets. Everyone has sent us blankets and, while they are very useful, I think givers-of-gifts-to-babies should be reminded that babies need other things, too: a rubberized sheet, blanket and sheets for later use in the crib, a few non-poisonous toys, or a bottle of Scotch to insure a relaxed mother; these are what I would recommend.

February 26—I have suddenly faded; there is a blank, nervous weariness that falls on me at the end of a day, now, and even a midday nap does not help much. Many small rests and keyed-down activity seem to be the best. But I am suddenly depressed about how much more everyone else seems to know about babies than I do. I wonder if one ever feels as completely adult as one's responsibilities should make one.

February 27—Now the long sleepless nights set in. I suppose it's because of the increasing size and higher position of the baby. I'm a stomach sleeper ordinarily, and just in the past week or so it has become impossible.

Later: The feet that have been under my ribs for so long are now down to my navel, although they still move up from time to time, and the relief is almost too much. I feel curiously light; I can breathe without feeling stifled; my intestines, for the first time in months, are not cramped. Everything feels very relaxed and preparing; I can feel my pelvic muscles stretching, and the soft exploring motions of the baby as it burrows downward. I felt, in fact, too well to *want* to sleep; I began to remember how it feels to have a waist, how it feels to be empty of all but yourself inside. The idea of labor becomes welcome, although I still cannot quite believe it is going to happen, and am still afraid of it.

It has always seemed strange to me that anything so ecstatic as love should bring about something that ends in pain, and, while I expect some pain, I am beginning to believe that it may also have some of the ecstasy of love.

March 9—Since the last writing, everything has changed. I went up to the doctor on Friday, where he handed me the X-ray report. I tried to understand what "frank breech" meant, and then saw the X-rays, with that queer, shadowy, bony head *not* in the position I had fondly believed it to be in, but up under my ribs. "This means," the doctor said, "that at the time of delivery we prefer to use less anesthesia." They like to have the mother pretty conscious to help that head out with her own stomach muscles. He doesn't think a Caesarian will be necessary.

Spent a ghastly evening with Nick and Liz. Or rather, a nice-enough evening, except that after five hours of being upright, my back became intolerably sore, my stomach tense with weight, all of me racked and intent on staying upright; yet I could not find words to suggest we go home. And Nick never thought to ask me.

I suppose my lack of sexual attraction has something to do with it, too . . . makes him feel a lack of sympathy or empathy or something. Pregnant women want so much to be cherished; to be misshapen is at any time distressing, but to feel oneself not cherished because misshapen is doubly so.

March 11—Reconciled with Nick again, after several chilly days resulting from his neglect a couple of evenings ago. Things eventually get thrashed out, very low-key, while he pulls off his socks or I am attempting to read, neither of us looking at the other.

One thing about reconciliations: I always realize again that no matter how much one may dislike or be impatient with one's own body, there is no comfort quite so great as someone else's. The touch of another's hand, warming one's feet on the back of someone else's knees in bed . . . what a mindless and wonderful comfort, beyond all the difficulties of words!

I've been thinking about the three stages of the self-

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consciousness of pregnancy. The first is when you wonder if you are noticeable or not, and don't know if it's better to have people realize you are pregnant or just let them think you're getting fat. The second covers all the middle months, when you're quite obviously pregnant; then it is a queer, naked feeling to walk along the streets and feel no longer anonymous, realizing that you bear, as it were, the stigma of past passion wherever you go. The third stage, which I have mercifully entered now, is when you just don't care very much; the event is so close that you are living more in the future than in the present.

March 12—Had a doctor's appointment today. What most interested me about this appointment, beside the fact that I was able to make it, was that the doctor poked me and said the uterus was becoming sensitive. This means it is developing an irritability of its own, and is preparing for labor. All night long, my sensitive uterus has been moving querulously. I feel quite an affection for it, and just hope it won't become desperate and decide to discharge its cargo at the wrong time. There are so many days when I feel quite ready to face labor . . . and so many when I don't. . . . I hope it will choose the right one.

Later: Sliding quietly downhill all day. Right now I am incapable of anything more than a movie and the Sunday funnies, with maybe a box of chocolates on the side. One of those hard-to-reach-out-to-other-people times.

March 13—Well, this would have been the day, if my count had been right. Rather odd to be still here.

March 14—Monday, and the old guilty feeling as Nick goes off for another week's work, with not enough sleep because of the baby's and my restlessness. Why should the work of the world be so very split up? I don't find house-cleaning much fun, either, and I'm sure if we could just combine some of our jobs and efforts we'd be much happier. Damn it, it is ridiculous—you marry a man so you will be able to see more of him, and then he has to get a job to support you, and you see less of him than ever.

March 15—A new tension is that Nick's six-week continence is beginning to tell on him. And the enforced estrangement is hard on me, too, though my own desire is somewhat dimmed at this time. There seems to be some factor during the latter part of pregnancy that raises the woman's threshold, although during the early months our relations were even more satisfactory than usual.

Well, I just hope childbirth doesn't make me dislike all the manifestation of sex. A successful marriage doesn't exactly depend on sex, but I can't imagine one without it.

March 16—A good night's sleep at last. It is still an awkward thing to sleep with, and no position is comfortable for long, but at least it didn't kick. Why, I don't know. But being slept out is wonderful, alters my whole outlook. I have

I see things with greater clarity, and feel strong and light and ready for effort, like a runner before a race.

finally packed a bag for the hospital, although I'm convinced it won't be necessary till Sunday, an attitude which neither Nick nor my brother can quite believe is justified.

Nick has been very sweet and forbearing and interested, I told him I was glad to see him take an intelligent interest, as I expected him to help a good deal in the first few months, which seemed to strike him as an entirely new idea. I don't know why young fathers seem to think young mothers know anything more about baby care than they do. The old theory of natural maternal instinct, I guess. But the very fact that the theories of child care have changed so much in the past twenty years seems to me to prove that you can't rely entirely on instincts.

Somehow I expect Nick to be much better with the baby than I am. Maybe I should have been taking a course in child care all these weeks. But I thought it would be easier to learn on a baby in which I might take some personal interest. I just hope I don't drown it in its first bath.

It just occurs to me, patting this head beneath my ribs, that it is remarkably like Nick's head—the same broad brow and solid bone structure. I keep forgetting that it may look like Nick, that it is Nick's child and not just some stray. It makes a difference, having this head a familiar head in miniature. It seems more personal, more like something that already belongs to me.

March 18—Spent the morning cleaning myself. Cleanliness never bothered me much before; no face creams, no waving of the hair every night. But somehow the best way I can think of to get ready for the hospital is to make myself physically spotless. Nothing is more irritating than dirty hair when you are in bed. Last night, lying awake, I became quite upset wondering, What if it should come tonight, and my hair not washed for a week!

The doctor was more friendly than usual today, which relieves me somewhat; he has never seemed to have much time for me, although he is always gentle and pleasant. But it is a strange relationship, all the same. I wish I knew him a little better. It is so odd to go through one of the most intimate experiences of one's life with a comparative stranger . . . who knows more about one's body than probably anyone else.

March 19—Out in the afternoon to buy baby shirts, but could not find the sort we wanted. We finally got a shirt, a rubberized pad for the bassinet and a package of diaper liners.

March 21—A number of friends, alarmed at not being able to reach us last night, have been calling, and I am rather surprised to find myself so well and calm. Today would be a fine day for it. I am not at all sorry it wasn't yesterday, because I was in a rather anguished and resistant mood. Keeping active is certainly the best antidote of all.

March 22—On the above theory, I spent yesterday afternoon scrubbing the kitchen floor and dusting the stairs, but even this did not help dislodge the baby. I think I've just made

life too comfortable for it; it knows it won't be able to get ice cream and cake and roast beef by itself for several months, so it's just decided to stay where it is. So, following *that* theory (a hobby that is all that's left to me now), I had four Scotch-and-ices and a large indigestible Italian dinner with David and Nancy and Nick and some visiting firemen, and dropped in on Liz and Nina afterward, about midnight. Liz and Nina gave us a fine bamboo armchair from Hong Kong, to "sit in while holding the baby," and we trekked home through the Village swinging it casually. A lovely evening.

March 23—The first definite sign of progress last night: four or five of what seemed to be strong contractions. Rather a pleasant sensation. I lay listening to Nick being soundly asleep and wondered whether to wake him, but, since the contractions never assumed a definite rhythm, I decided they couldn't be the onset of labor, and fell asleep. It was really rather exciting; I kept wanting to stop each contraction and see what it felt like; it is odd to have an entirely new sensation inside one's self.

March 24—I'm afraid my basic attitude toward this child hasn't changed, after all. I was resigned enough, willing to tolerate it if it would not be too inconvenient . . . but this delay has reduced me to paroxysms of fury. I am sure it will wait until I am in the middle of something fascinating, with my hair unwashed and sixty blocks from home . . . and then decide to come.

6:00 P.M.: Feel a little more optimistic, having spent the afternoon working off energy in shopping.

March 25—One of Those Days; one of those Things-Are-Against-Us days. Spent minutes struggling with the jammed mailbox this morning, to find that it contained only a card inviting Nick to meet some unknown chap at an AVC meeting; got into a slow line at the A&P and had to wait three quarters of an hour for meat; overestimated my capacity as usual and came staggering home trying to keep seven pounds of roast beef and ten of groceries off the baby's head.

I spent a wretched night last night, finished off by a little sleep after six, and not one, but two, erotic dreams. This seems to disprove those who feel pregnancy is woman's most complete sexual fulfillment. Only in the sense of being the most complete result of a cause, it seems to me.

March 30—I have been washing windows, gardening, and going for long walks with almost no discomfort. All that worries me is that the baby is, of course, still growing, and I am afraid it may get big enough to require a Caesarian.

O God, how wonderful it is to be in love, and in spring. The habits of marriage so often dull love, and make one forget that it is still there, and remembering it suddenly is an almost unbearable sweetness.

If this child is beautiful, it may need no other reason than the joy of its motion, the perfection of its gestures. Some children are made so. . . . I cannot really hope to have one like that, and such a creature is perhaps not very happy, since it always needs an audience. I want a child whose beauty is not so much a thing to exclaim on, a thing which will make it self-conscious, but which is the external reflection of an inner harmony, a delight in living. To create a beautiful human being is more difficult and more necessary than to create a statue or a poem, for this living loveliness is the real thing, beauty direct, a living altar to whatever gods created perfection.

Let my child be beautiful, then, but with that inner fire which is the truest loveliness.

Let it be this, and I will be grateful, and think—that is enough!

April 1—Racking my brain to think of a kindly April Fool's joke to play on Nick. The only real joke, I suppose, would be to have the baby start today, but I can't seem to arrange that. But what a curse such a birthday would be for a child!

The first of my discomforts has begun. My legs and arms are becoming edematous (water in the tissues), and the skin under my eyes is puffy. My face is breaking out in pimples. I am beginning to realize that the stretched skin on my stomach will take quite a while to shrink back. I seem to be getting hemorrhoids. Twenty-five is about the latest that one can have a first child without much strain. Damn the culture which makes us put off childbearing past the time biologically suited to it!

April 3—Well, I had intended to make a very dramatic little notation when the event occurred, saying something like, "labor has started, off to the hospital," but everything became very crowded.

Friday night, we spent a placid evening at home. Aside from an upset stomach and a sudden eruption of pimples all over my face and chest, I felt quite as usual, and was comforting Nick, who had spent a very busy week, with the thought of a quiet week-end. Toward midnight, however, a sudden fit of depression overcame me. Thinking back on this, I am struck by its resemblance to premenstrual depression. I was awakened at nine in the morning by a sensation which was not, to my disappointment, a new one, but something like menstrual cramps. I lay in bed for half an hour; then I began to consider that if it *was* labor, it takes me two hours to get thoroughly awake and dressed, so I had better get up. By eleven I was dressed, fed and packed. The pains were coming at five-minute intervals. I thanked a lucky providence that I had washed my hair the day before, did a pretty shaky job on my nails, gathered up six books, and came downstairs, where Nick was puttering around with a watering can. It was a lovely morning. As casually as I could, I asked Nick if he had made any arrangements for the station wagon over the week-end. As the taxi strike was still on, we had asked Leo to lend us his station wagon in case of need.

Nick's reaction was much more electric than mine. He tore upstairs, phoned Leo, showered, and was down again in ten minutes looking very double-breasted and solemn in his best suit. Twenty minutes later, as we were sitting in a gingerly fashion in the sun, the station wagon arrived and Leo and his wife, who is six months pregnant, dashed in. Then, unfortunately, things rapidly became anticlimactic. The cramps began coming twenty minutes apart, and finally more or less stopped altogether. We sat in the sun and drank beer and chatted.

Finally they decided that, since nothing seemed likely to happen in the next hour, they would take the station wagon and do a little shopping uptown.

We lunched at three, and Liz dropped by in a fine spring mood, and the cramps began to come back. By then, I think, most of our immediate circle of friends, who had happened to call during the morning, knew what was going on. I never expected to have labor so publicly! Then David and Nancy dropped by in a flurry, bearing rather prematurely, flowers. Liz left, Leo and his wife and the station wagon returned, and we sat down to play poker. I was beginning to feel rather silly. The only thing that made me think that it *was* labor, and that it would continue, was that a sort of mucous clot had emerged at eleven o'clock. When we called the hospital about 5:30, the nurse seemed to think this was indicative, too. Still, I did not want to go up to the hospital.

Leo and his wife left about seven; at eight, we decided to have supper, and Nick went out to get some ice cream and sausages to supplement our larder. By this time the cramps were coming at about eight-minute intervals, and were becoming quite severe. Feeling I ought not to interrupt our friends' supper, however, I cooked and ate some asparagus, while Nick fried sausages. I was halfway through my ice cream before I suddenly began to feel that I was where I really shouldn't be. We dropped everything in such a hurry that Nick forgot to lock the door. We tore up the West Side Highway, Nick slowing up for every pain, and David and Nancy in the back seat, being very quiet.

The older I grow, the more I realize that the appropriate things are rarely said in great moments, and that literature's chief lie is that it says them. Even my thoughts were fairly commonplace. What I thought of were the lights, the cars, the time, and looking for the proper turn-off.

We arrived at the hospital a little after nine-thirty, and I had been more or less in labor for twelve and a half hours. A girl from the admitting office carried my bag and ushered me into a room diagonally across from the elevator, where a pleasant red-haired nurse greeted me and introduced herself. I undressed quickly and got into bed.

A nurse came in to shave me, and then they asked me to sign a rather sinister little paper authorizing the doctor to give me any anesthetic or perform any operation he thought necessary. After that they offered to give me a painkiller, but I told the doctor I wanted to do without as long as I could. He seemed dubious, and left, and two minutes later I was regretting my words, for a really quite unbearable pain came

and I felt something flowing. I rang for the nurse, who took one look, and sent in a stretcher. As they rolled me off, I saw that I had bled, and realized things were really beginning to happen.

They wheeled me into the elevator. The pains were quite intense now, and, though I could just bear them, I realized I couldn't stand them for any length of time. I asked for a mild sedative. The pain began in my loins and swelled upward till it seemed to fill my whole abdomen, but just as I began to feel that I couldn't stand it any longer, it would ebb away again, leaving me feeling extraordinarily peaceful. In these brief periods I seemed to see things with a greater clarity than ever before, and I felt strong and light and ready for effort, like a runner before a race.

On the seventeenth floor, everything seemed dark except the little labor-room into which they wheeled me, but I was soon surrounded by a number of young girls with masks, all of whom introduced themselves.

A student nurse came in and told me the doctor had ordered an enema. I said I had had an enema that morning, and I wanted a sedative. The enema girl said the doctor would prescribe a sedative when he came, and repeated her orders about an enema. After a little more argument, I let her give me one—quite a painful and uncomfortable process at the stage I was then in—and I felt much better afterward. Also, I became aware almost immediately of a change in the pains; my stomach began to quiver at the end of each one, and I felt an almost irresistible desire to push. Then, suddenly, while I was in the middle of a pain, the doctor appeared.

He did a brief rectal examination, said the neck of the cervix was almost gone, and told me to bear down with my next pain. With considerable relief I gave way to my natural impulse, and did bear down. This changed the character of the pain altogether; in fact, it stopped hurting, and I realized I was in the second stage of labor. This is a very curious sensation. The impulse to push quite runs away with you; once you start pushing, the push takes hold of you and won't let you stop. It is a tremendous physical effort, and I'm sure my face was horribly contorted in what looked like agony, but I can't remember it as being painful at all. In fact, it was even rather pleasant, a stretching, abandoned sort of feeling, a feeling of getting rid of something, and above all, of being able to make some positive effort and not having just to lie and endure any more. It is also slightly embarrassing, as everything relaxes all at once, but you just have to decide not to worry; childbirth *isn't* neat!

After a few more of these new contractions, the doctor cut the fetal membranes. I realized the baby was almost out, and was almost a little disappointed that it should be over so quickly. The moment the membranes were cut, the contractions began in earnest. Three or four student nurses whipped me onto a stretcher and wheeled me into the delivery-room, a large bare room next door that looked like any operating-room. Here they assisted me onto a table and strapped down my wrists. My legs were lifted onto two metal supports; they were beginning to feel crampy, and I asked the doctor to rub them, which he did. That was my only real discomfort, and it went away as soon as my legs were properly supported.

Someone switched on a dazzling light overhead; there was a mirror diagonally above me, in which I could have seen myself if I hadn't been afraid to try. Below this mirror was a ring of bent-over doctors and nurses in masks, just like a movie. For a moment it seemed so unreal I almost laughed. Then there came an enormous contraction; I let go and hung on and pushed, and felt the baby come halfway out . . . and stop.

"Wouldn't you like just a little whiff, now?" the anesthetist asked.

"No. Dammit, leave me alone," I said, waiting for the next contraction.

"Take some gas . . . it's for the baby's sake," the doctor said finally.

"Just a whiff," said the anesthetist, slipping a mask over my face.

Okay, I thought, if it will please you, just a whiff. As he clamped the mask down, I knew he meant to put me out, and I thought to myself, A real sell. I've been had.

". . . Stuck halfway," the doctor said from a distance.

I shoved the mask aside. "If you'd just let me *push*," I said, with painful articulation.

"You'll push anyway," he said, and then, as I went under, I thought, of course, he has to cut me. Why didn't he say so? . . .

When I came out, my limbs refused to work at all. In the background I could hear the hiccuping cry of the new-born. Then a nurse came by holding it—a small red-faced baby, its face contorted from screaming, and while it didn't seem to belong to me at all, I felt very sorry for it, and thought how it looked like my father's oldest baby, and then they wheeled it away down the long corridor, still screaming. . . . I could see the face of a clock, which read almost midnight. They told me the baby had been born at 11:37. The whole business, from my entrance into the hospital to the birth of the baby, had taken slightly less than two hours!

The room was still abustle with student nurses; they had all taken off their masks, and I realized, with a slight sense of disappointment, that the climax was over, and I had missed most of it.

I asked to see Nick. The doctor, who was on his way out, told me I could not go down just yet, but that he would tell Nick everything was all right. I thanked him as best I could; I guess we were still a little angry at each other over the anesthetic business. And then suddenly he was just a tired man going home at midnight after a long day's work, and I wished I had been able to tell him what his work meant to me.

They wheeled me into a near-by room to wait until they were sure the bleeding had stopped. I lay there for an hour, comfortably relaxed by some codeine, wondering whether Nick knew. Had he seen it? Did he know how well I had come through? I wanted to get up off the stretcher and rush out to all the women in labor and tell them that they, too, need not be afraid; that birth was not the terrible thing it was supposed to be after all. The voices faded and, lying in that dimly lit and quiet room, all I thought of was Nick.

The hour went by fast enough. Then they wheeled me down in the elevator, back to my room, and a moment later Nick knocked and came in quietly, grinning and weary. Nick has a kind of luminous gentleness about him when he is deeply moved, incongruous in so big a man, but we didn't exactly melt into one of the wordless tender scenes so dear to fiction because I was in a state of high excitement, and began to talk a blue streak.

He seemed very pleased and excited about the whole thing, and glad it had been easy for me. Toward three o'clock he began to droop and I let him go home. I was still feeling far too alive and interested to sleep, however, and I lay awake reading "Mansfield Park" until 4:30. Even after I turned off the light, I did not really sleep. The whole business was exciting, like the last drive in a horse race, or the "Hallelujah Chorus"—something worked up to, but not finally exhausting.

About six o'clock, when the light was just coming through the shades, I became starving hungry and rang for the nurse, who brought me the two apples I had packed for just such an emergency. I had planned to eat only one but somehow they both went. Wonderful to lie there in the cool crisp dawn, eating cool crisp apples. . . .

April 4—The Hour of Rising was heralded by a nurse pulling up the shades and bringing me a toothbrush and basins of water. I ate a hearty breakfast, and then lay in blissful contemplation of my thinness for about a quarter of an hour, thinking of Nick who also probably was in bed, sound asleep, with the light falling on him through the Venetian blinds.

I decided to call Mother.

She came dashing right up with a bunch of flowers. Nick had already sent me a potted azalea, which arrived before breakfast, and the room began to look pleasantly occupied. Mother and I chatted for a while, and at eleven o'clock a nurse came in and asked if I was ready to see my baby. Mother said of course I was, and then they brought her in.

"You have a beautiful daughter," the nurse said, as she deposited the bundle on my bed. So I have been told by almost every other nurse, but I think they must have some other standard of comparison than mine. She is still so evidently new-born, like a creature just out of long immersion in water, which of course she is. The skin under her eyes is so puffy; the region above her eyebrows is deeply sunken, and her hands and face are covered with peeling skin. And those enormous violet eyes, with pupil and iris indistinguish-

able, stared up at me with that sorrowful, ancient look. However, I give thanks for two blessings; since she was a breech baby, her head is not distorted or bruised by instruments, and her color is said to be particularly good.

All I could do was sit there and try to meet the unwavering stare of those violet eyes. With what does one bridge the gap between the new-born and one who has gone through twenty-five years of life? Surely she was drawing some immense conclusion from this first impression that would affect her whole life. What could I do to impress her favorably?

I suppose if I'd made up my mind to breast-feed her, this social embarrassment wouldn't have arisen; there would have been something to do besides stare at each other. But I haven't. . . . I can't.

Later Nick came and spent the rest of the afternoon. He isn't allowed to see the baby except under glass, which rather annoys him, but he says she looks fine, much better than when he first saw her.

April 5—Having taken a phenobarbital last night, I slept for the first time in thirty-six hours, and now feel a little groggy. My stitches ache a good deal.

In the afternoon they wheeled in a lamp and gave me a heat treatment to help heal the stitches. I am beginning to feel pretty groggy and sore. Queer, that the aftermath should be so much worse than the actual birth. Nobody warned me about this feeling. . . .

April 6—The place is beginning to look like a bloomin' florist shop. Everything from roses (from Nick) to pansies (from Liz, because they are appropriate for babies). I wish people would send potted flowers for our garden, though.

April 9—I'm beginning to feel pretty protective toward her. I find the facts of motherhood rather pleasant, now, but the words describing it still make me queasy. The biological portions of life, it seems to me, have never been adequately described.

April 13—WE ARE GOING HOME. I wish I could convey the great excitement of the words. The best time to leave will be about one, just after I have had my lunch and when the baby's eleven o'clock meal has shaken down a little. Then she will be ready to be fed at just about the time she gets home, which will be psychologically very valuable, like buttering a cat's feet when you bring him to a new place, so that by the time he has finished cleaning himself off and filling his stomach (his two favorite activities) he will feel too genial to resent his new surroundings.

Later: Nick and my brother arrived at one, by which time I was dressed and lunched. How astonishing to be thin! One doesn't get used to being without a baby all at once. In the morning, before I am fully awake, I still half-consciously expect to feel the old familiar movement inside myself.

Presently there was the sound of little wheels in the hall, and the nurse brought in the baby.

Trying not to breathe on her, we all tried to dress her at once, while she just lay there, looking mildly indignant. When she was fully clad in diaper, shirt, rubber pants, dress, baby bunting, and blanket (it was skin-temperature outside, but we thought she might catch cold), Nick carried the bottle containing a 24-hour supply of formula and my suitcase downstairs; my brother went to get his car. Then Nick returned and we went to check out the baby.

Early afternoon is a fine time to take a baby home. Most of the patients have just had lunch and are napping, and the hospital is taking a breather. The hallways are more or less empty and the few nurses around are not too busy to pretend that taking a baby home is a pretty big thing. We got the little ticket from her crib and a little card with such vital information as height, weight, formula, schedule, and the day the cord came off. Thus bearing all her short history with her, our daughter rode down in the elevator in her father's arms for her first glimpse of the outside world.

It was truly a radiant day. Gulls curved crookedly through the air, their white bodies bleached in the sun. Even my brother's car responded to this general effervescence and took the bumps so gracefully that the baby, after staring at everything distrustfully, fell asleep in Nick's arms.

It occurred to me suddenly then that delivery is not the end but the beginning. Let the past be done with, I thought. Perhaps the secret of life is to accept change gracefully. I turned around and grinned at Nick.

... THE END

There are plenty of honest young men and women in politics today. They are serving their nation, State or town competently, with the integrity and vigor young Americans generally bring to any job.

But scattered across this great land of ours are a few politicians who are doing more than the job expected of them. They are performing community services of a sort never included in campaign promises. This month, at the beginning of the annual political season: we salute a man who is our idea of a politician, *plus*.

He is Hugh Gregg, the mayor of Nashua, New Hampshire. Only thirty-two years old, Mayor Gregg has helped to save Nashua and its 35,000 people from disaster.

Hugh Gregg was born and brought up in Nashua. He was twenty-eight when he came home from war and started to practice law. A year later, he surprised Nashua's older politicians by running for alderman—and winning!

A few months later, the sky caved in on Nashua. The town's largest manufacturing concern, a textile firm, suddenly announced it was moving away and dismissing its 3,600 workers. In 3,600 Nashua homes there would be no money to buy decent food or clothes for the kids, to pay the rent or home mortgage payments. A few relief checks would come in, and then—creeping despair.

To Hugh Gregg, there was at stake the happiness of folks he had gone to school with, people whose youngsters would be going to school with his own two kids.

Under his leadership, a citizens committee raised \$100,000 and, with this as a down-payment, bought the textile firm's buildings.

Day and night, young Alderman Gregg searched for new industries to move into those buildings where no wheels turned. He never let up—and he hasn't let up yet. As of now, his work has brought twelve new companies into Nashua—and the unemployment problem has been licked.

Last fall, Nashua elected Hugh Gregg mayor. Nashua likes his kind of politics. We think the rest of America could use more of his down-to-earth political philosophy, too.

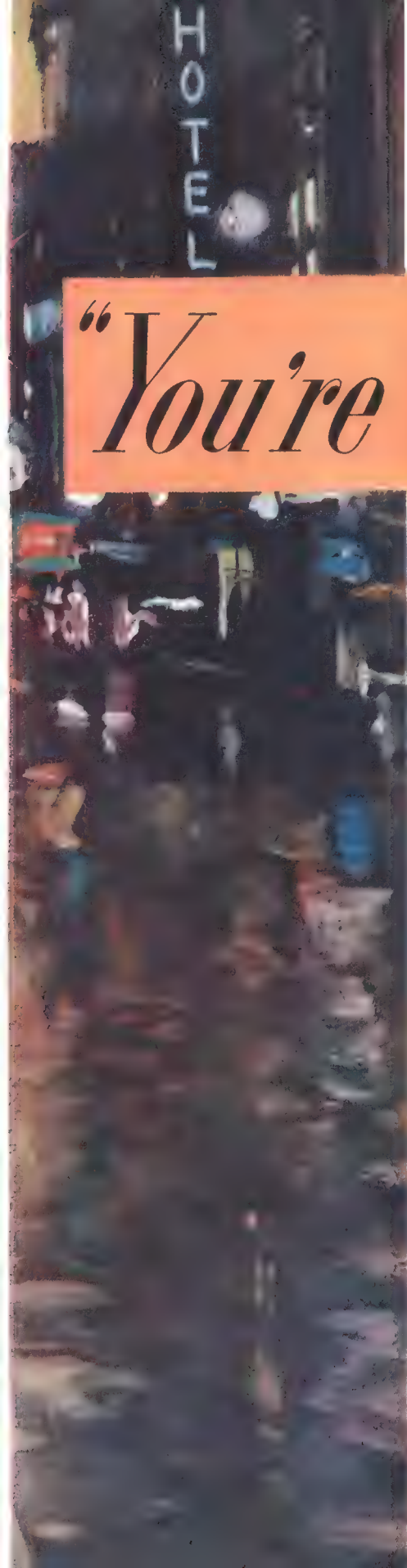


His neighbors like Mayor Gregg. He brought new jobs and new hope to Nashua.

A Young Mayor With a Young Idea

A man in a light-colored suit and red tie stands in a dark, rainy city street at night. He is looking upwards with a contemplative expression. A clock is visible in the background, and the street is wet and reflective. The scene is dimly lit, with some light coming from the street and the clock face.

I didn't know what to do. I knew my money wouldn't last long. Finally I decided to try a little hotel on a side street.



Kevin was proud of them, his wonderful famous parents. He wished with all his heart they could be proud of *him*, that maybe some day they would say:

"You're a Smart Kid"

I had a very interesting summer vacation, so I really have something to write about in this theme. Usually, Kevin and Mary rent a place in Westport, Connecticut. It's not really in Westport. It's a few miles out of town, on what's called the Sound. I guess they might have taken it again if it hadn't been for me and my kid sister, Joan. Plus, of course, the fact that Kevin had to go to the Coast.

Anyway, as I guess almost everybody around school here knows by now, I spent this summer in New York City, which would have been different anyway—even if it hadn't been for getting my picture in the tabloids.

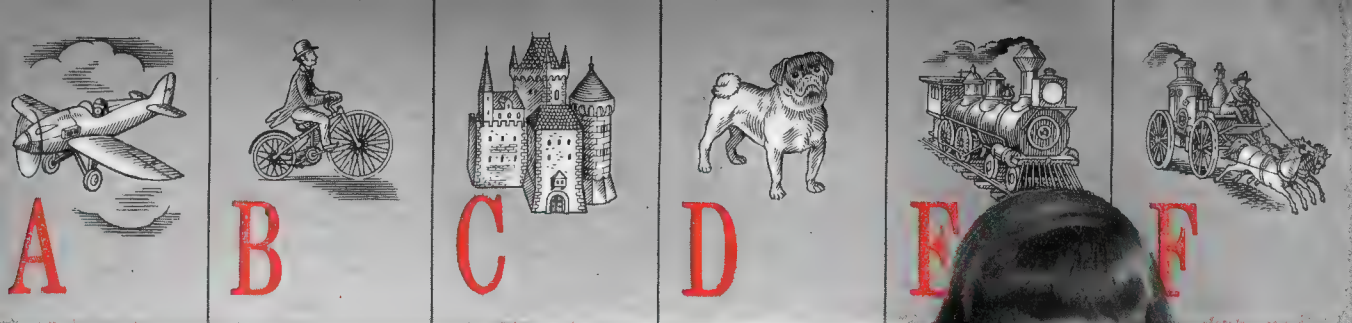
When you get right down to it, there wasn't ever much to do up there in Connecticut except swim. I like swimming; Kevin says it's my only sport. I've been hunting, but only a couple of times, the year I went to a school in Vermont. That was three years ago, when I was only eleven. Kevin said if I passed all my subjects at school he'd buy me a rifle, but I didn't, and the next year I went to school in New York City. I like skiing, too, though I've never said much about it to Kevin. He doesn't ski, thinks it's silly. I guess I don't need to explain that Kevin is Kevin, Sr., my father.

The summer before last he tried to teach me to play tennis, but I guess I'm not exactly the tennis type. For one thing, I'm too tall. I'm already a head taller than Kevin, and he's always kidding me about my long legs. He's disappointed that I'm not more the athletic type, like him. You see, he was stroke on the crew at his college and on the tennis team, too. Kind of an all-around man—what they call a Big Man on the Campus. Naturally, he got good grades, and I guess it wouldn't be so bad if I was more bookish. Like Joan. Only she's both. Gets good grades in school *and* plays a neat game of tennis. Also she's two years younger than I am and I'm told is considered cute. I can't see it myself.

I'm not like any of the rest of them, and I remember I once thought I might be adopted. I guess everybody goes through that stage. Mary just laughed when I mentioned it to her. She said I most certainly wasn't, but said it would (*Continued on page 74*)

BY MERLE MILLER

ILLUSTRATED BY HARRY ANDERSON



Are you letting horse-and-buggy school-books cheat your child? When stupidity and graft guide the choice of old-fashioned books for schools, your child is the victim.

BY J. ROBERT MOSKIN



Your child doesn't have to look up the word "airplane" in the dictionary. She has learned about planes from experience, or from her reading, or the movies.

But what would happen if she had to turn to her school dictionary for information? If she were a pupil at one large public school in an Eastern city—one of the richest cities in the world—she would learn that the most modern airplane in existence is the 1918 Caproni triplane. This dictionary, assigned as a reference book, was last revised in 1924.

In that same school, the most current American history text stops its story of the U. S. in 1935. Yet this school is no isolated example of neglect and shortsighted thinking in the selection of schoolbooks.

Your child may learn his lessons from books which are out-of-date.

Schoolbooks are among the basic tools of free, public education. When stupidity or politics enter into the selection of texts, your child is the victim. Frequently the lazy method of reordering an old, out-of-date text cheats youngsters of the opportunity to benefit from modern advances in teaching techniques. McGuffey's Reader, which revolutionized the teaching of reading 120 years ago, sold 24,000 copies last year, mostly in the Ohio valley. The last major revision of this series was made in 1879. Minor revisions in individual editions were made as recently as thirty years ago. In New York City, during a recent school year, nine out of ten schoolbooks bought were replacements for worn-out ones, leaving almost no money in the school budget for modern texts.

Often political influence plays a part in the selection of the books our children use in school.

Recently, in an important city in Kansas, a politician attempted to force the State Board of Education to buy an American history book in which he was "interested."

He whipped up a storm of letters and telegrams to board members from his cronies in the Kansas public-school system. He even claimed that competing books

contained Communist propaganda. Rival book salesmen fought back, and proved that his charges were untrue. Three history books were adopted, instead of the single one recommended. *But in the course of this controversy, did anyone ask which book might be best for the school children?*

Situations like this are partially the result of vigorous competition to sell books to our schools. The ninety big publishers of schoolbooks squeeze their rivalry into the four months before school opens in the fall. Their \$130 million business each year sells seventy-four million schoolbooks, plus forty-one million pupil work-books and uncounted teachers' manuals. Since all these books are bought in lots ranging in size from large to huge, there is almost always a chance for graft to creep in. Until a recent modification in Texas' schoolbook-adoption system, a Texas sale could mean the purchase of fifteen carloads of arithmetics—500,000 books.

Some superintendents and parents have found ways to improvement

Not every community submits to neglect and ignorance. Parents in Slatington, Pennsylvania, can watch their youngsters do their homework with a sense of well-being. Elwood Prestwood, when he became Slatington's school superintendent eight years ago, found boys and girls studying from schoolbooks that had been published forty years ago. He set about to correct the situation. By leaving selection of the best, most modern books to trained teachers and by making his pennies count, Mr. Prestwood was able to give each kid in Slatington, not a wealthy town, two dollars' worth of new, up-to-date books a year.

In other communities, parents themselves have taken a hand in perfecting their children's education. Parents of Westport, Connecticut, under the inspiration of School Superintendent Gerhardt E. Rast, have formed a "School Study Council," for the improvement of their schools.



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is for obsolete

This plan is one that any alert small community can follow.

In bigger cities, interested parents and school people have a more difficult job. Chicago has only recently cleaned up its school system. New York City parents, working with the Public Education Association, recently found youngsters in an ancient schoolhouse near the rising towers of the United Nations using battered American history books that had been written in 1919 and not revised since 1923, when Warren Harding was President of the United States.

Those books were printed even before the birth of some of the children's parents.

One story illustrating old-fashioned thinking about books comes out of the Midwest, where the superintendent of schools in a small Illinois city recently asked his school board for more money for textbooks. The school board's treasurer asked, "What's wrong with those grammar books in our warehouse? Maybe they were published in 1901. But, surely, the English language hasn't changed." He had to be shown that although grammar has changed little since Teddy Roosevelt was in the White House, methods of teaching grammar have altered considerably.

New teaching methods and new understanding of what your child can and should learn have improved textbooks since today's parents were in school. Dr. Walter D. Cocking, former Tennessee commissioner of education and teacher at Georgia University, remembers, "When I was a boy, they had words in our speller which no one would ever use even if he could spell them. Since then, we have been able to cut down the number of words a boy has to learn from 10,000 to 4,000."

Research has improved textbooks infinitely, but it has also increased the odds against your child's using the most modern books by making them much more expensive for a school to buy. Take your child's reader. This must be scientifically prepared by a staff of trained editors. There must be several volumes for each grade, because recent experiments have proved that there are several reading

ages in every classroom. Each reader must be accompanied by work-books and teachers' manuals. The American Book Company spent nine years and more than a million dollars developing a new reader series being published this year.

Spending for schoolbooks costs little, but there are many who fight it

Despite such leaping costs and vast improvements, spending for textbooks takes less than two cents out of every dollar going into current school expenses across the nation.

Yet this tiny fraction of our national educational budget is almost continuously under attack. Taxpayer groups try to reduce costs. And then, there are the partisan groups who want their own political viewpoints put across in schoolbooks.

Some of these pressures are more amusing than frightening. A publisher seeking to have his geography book adopted in Maine towns had a difficult time because the book carried a picture of Idaho potatoes. He changed the picture to one of a neutral root vegetable that neither Idaho nor Maine could object to.

Many towns across the country are conscientiously working for an enlightened method of textbook selection. In Clayton, Missouri, School Superintendent John Bracken has organized committees of teachers to select all textbooks.

Similar committees in the Elmont School District of New York carry this idea one step further and discuss their decisions with parents' groups. Supervising Principal Ray Lindbloom almost always adopts the final teacher-parent recommendations.

A growing interest in better schools and better schoolbooks enables us to look forward confidently to the day when town and State school boards will recognize that your child needs the best textbooks possible, chosen by the most qualified people available. ... THE END

Once Upon a Park Bench

They saw eye to eye—the improvident squirrel
and the happy-go-lucky young man.

Then along came Maggie—

BY DON STANFORD

ILLUSTRATED BY ARTHUR SARNOFF

The girl, ignoring Eddie, chirped and held out a nut; the squirrel, ignoring the girl, strove to cram a chunk of sandwich into his cheek.



A single yellowing leaf detached itself from a branch of the fourth tree on the right-hand side of the path leading into Central Park across from the Plaza, and drifted lazily downward to settle precisely on the gray-flanneled knee of the young man who lounged on the bench beneath the tree. There was a mild and bracing bite in the air, a crispness hinting of the end of summer, and except for the young man on the bench and a raffish-looking gray squirrel frisking aimlessly in the path, this particular part of the park was deserted.

Eddie Howard regarded the leaf on his knee with melancholy distaste, and with a flick of his finger sent it fluttering to the path. Promptly the squirrel pounced upon it, examined it briskly, cast it contemptuously from him, and sat erect, feathery tail jerking indignantly, while he scolded Eddie petulantly.

"Look, Junior," Eddie protested mildly. "It isn't *my* leaf. And if you're nearsighted, it isn't *my* fault. I never said it was good to eat."

The squirrel swore briefly and turned his back

in disdain. Eddie sighed and extracted a delicatessen sandwich from his coat pocket, and at the first crackle of the wrapping the squirrel whirled to face him once more.

"All right, all right," Eddie said resignedly to the greedily expectant quiver of the squirrel's whiskers, and tossed a bit of crust. The squirrel seized it with both hands and crammed it into his mouth, the impatient jerks of his tail demanding more while his cheeks still bulged. Eddie reluctantly tore off another chunk and flipped it to the path.

"After all, Junior," Eddie said reasonably, as the squirrel pounced. "this is my lunch, such as it is. A man may sacrifice a satisfying meal for the sake of a sandwich in the park on what looks like it may be the last outdoor day of the year, but he can't very well be expected to sacrifice the sandwich too, can he? I'd have brought you one if—"

He broke off in midsentence, and his eyes widened in frank admiration of the girl approaching. She wore a neatly tailored suit and she carried herself with pride—justified, Eddie decided as he watched the skirt swirl (*Continued on page 60*)





ONE BOY —

His own folks call Private Ken Shadrick "the best there was." And when our One World shattered, he was all there was

BY WILLIAM LINDSAY GRESHAM

In an old Korean cemetery on a hill overlooking the village of Sojong a bazooka squad of the 24th Division had dug itself in. Red tanks advanced under a damp sky, gunned the village, rattled on to the railroad. Then the American bazooka opened up at them. A young GI raised his head above cover to observe the effect of his blast. A machine-gun burst from the Red tank turret cut him down. He was the first American infantryman to die in Korea.

Newspapers back home said he was Pvt. Kenneth Shadrick, from somewhere in West Virginia. The story hit front pages, then was swept aside by a rush of more startling war news — after all, it was only the story of one boy's death.

But it may have been — and of this we will know in time — the birth of One World.

At that moment on July 5, 1950, an American infantryman gave his life for a cause that was not his own country's alone. The Americans were fighting under their national colors — and in defense of the blue-and-white banner of the United Nations.

The One World idea was nothing new. It embraces the concept of swift defensive blows aimed at an aggressor by nations united for peace, and it was set forth by a professor of political economy thirty years ago. Woodrow Wilson saw with the eyes of a prophet the risk of mankind's destruction; he proposed the remedy and he met the scorn and abuse usually reserved for prophets. When American guns first spoke in Korea it was like a volley fired over the prophet-President's grave.

Meanwhile, what of Pvt. Kenneth Shadrick, Soldier of the World?

(Continued on page 86)

On summer nights, Geraldine Stewart liked to sit on the porch and visit with Ken Shadrick. She and his parents (*right*) mourn for the 19-year-old boy who was cut down by a Red machine gun in South Korea.

- ONE WORLD





Rosh Hashanah

AND

Yom Kippur

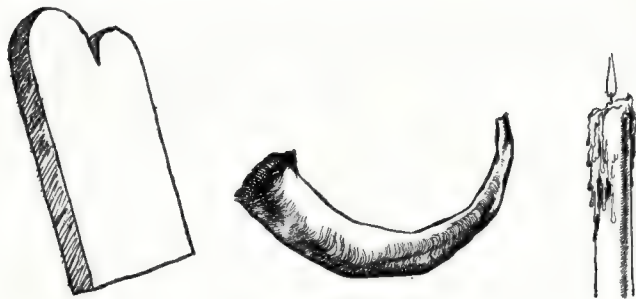
This moving article, first in an important new series, explains the meaning of Jewish holy days celebrated this month. Important religious observances of other faiths will be described in future issues of Redbook

The devout of most religions believe in a day of holy reckoning, on which no mortal may escape answering before God for the misdeeds of his earthly life. . . . In the Jewish faith—and in the hearts and minds of Jews since Nebuchadnezzar exiled them to Babylon—the heavens have proclaimed that awesome day once every year. The occasion is Rosh Hashanah, the Jewish New Year and a Day of Judgment for the living.

Rosh Hashanah is the anniversary of God's creation of the universe—and this year it will be 5,711, according to the Old Testament-based Hebrew calendar. In our modern-day 1950 calendar it falls on the twelfth of September.

Unlike the secular New Year, Rosh Hashanah is greeted not by a joyous and noisy celebration, but with earnest self-judgment and quiet contemplation of the spirit. For the Jewish tradition pronounces it a solemn time when man, revealed in all his weakness, stands humbled before his

*Magnificent in concept and execution, the painting on these pages symbolizes the supplication of the Jews before God on Rosh Hashanah. It was painted for Redbook Magazine by the celebrated young American artist, **William Pachner**. If you'd like a reproduction, suitable for framing—see page 80*



Important in Jewish history and religious observation are the Mosaic tablet, the shofar (ram's horn) and the memorial candle, left.

Maker; he hides nothing and denies nothing as he ponders the sins and failures of the past year and awaits His judgment. Rosh Hashanah is followed by the Ten Days of Penitence, which close with the twenty-four-hour fast of Yom Kippur, the Day of Atonement and the supremely pious climax to what Judaism calls the High Holy Days.

Thus, in the belief of the Jews, God presides over a court of justice on Rosh Hashanah and summons His children for a full accounting. Before Him are the books in which the acts and words of all men are inscribed. The heavenly court examines them during the Ten Days of Penitence, and by dusk on Yom Kippur the fate of all has been decreed and the books are sealed again for another year. Hence the customary salutation between Jews on Rosh Hashanah: "May you be inscribed and sealed for a good year."

This dramatic concept of the High Holy Days, first chronicled by a scholarly rabbi of the Second Century, stems in part from a similar belief of the ancient Babylonians who held that every year God decides anew the fate of the world.

But today, for Jew and non-Jew alike, there lies behind the mysticism of Rosh Hashanah an abiding truth of human experience: All we say and do constitutes a permanent record, perhaps inscribed in a heavenly ledger, and most certainly impressed in our memories and in the recollections of the people whom we influence. The character of every man—the sum of his acts and spoken words, his morals and his secret thoughts—lives on in his children, and thus, through the ages, helps mold the character of all mankind.

The Jewish seers have always emphasized righteousness for the sake of the individual's own happiness on earth, rather than as a means of securing a place in heaven after death. They perceive the need of man to re-examine and improve his character at regular intervals, both in the cause of his inner peace and for the good of society as a whole. So Rosh Hashanah is observed by prayer for the forgiveness of sins, and by vows to do better in the year just beginning. The Kingdom of God is attainable on earth, declared the ancient seers; and in the liturgy of Rosh Hashanah this wisdom is expressed in the plea to God for the banishment of wickedness and tyranny among men, and for the realization of man's dream of world brotherhood.

The High Holy Days, observed by Jews since Babylonian times, were first openly celebrated in North America in 1655—long before the United States became a nation—when the first Jewish place of worship was dedicated in New York. Thus Jews have performed the ceremonies of their faith on American soil since the earliest days of our country.

As with all Jewish holidays, Rosh Hashanah begins at sunset on the day before, and ends with the setting of the sun on the Day of Judgment itself. Orthodox and Conservative Jews observe the New Year for two days, Reform Jews for only one. On Rosh Hashanah Eve Jewish families gather in the synagogue for prayer and song to God. The service is conducted by the rabbi, who is a teacher and leader of his people, rather than a priest. There is no ecclesiastical government in the Jewish religion, so that the rabbi is not a member of a hierarchy; nor does he perform any sacraments, for

they also are absent in the ritual of Judaism. The rabbi is essentially a scholar, who possesses an encyclopedic knowledge of ancient Jewish law and customs. In the European ghettos, he often served as judge in disputes between Jews.

Late on Rosh Hashanah Eve, after the worshipers have returned to their homes, the head of the household recites a blessing over the holiday cup of wine. Then the meal is begun with a piece of bread dipped in honey or syrup—an omen for the desired sweetness of the coming year.

On Rosh Hashanah Day services start soon after dawn and continue until the afternoon. Prayers are recited and chanted by the rabbi, the cantor, who is a student of Judaism chosen for the beauty and resonance of his voice, and, in turn, by the choir and the congregation. Then honored members of the synagogue are called upon to read selections from the Torah, which is the Old Testament set down on scrolls of parchment. The Torah, often richly decorated in color, is written in Hebrew.

After the Bible recitation comes the most awe-inspiring ceremony of the day: the blowing of the shofar, or ram's horn. Since the days of Solomon's Temple the piercing blast of the shofar has symbolized a call awakening man's attention to the need for repenting his sins and for the renewal of his spirit. Its striking cry, like the sound of a hunter's horn, was used also in earlier times to announce the New Moon and the months of the year, as well as to declare war, to intimidate the enemy, and to make proclamations to the people. The shofar is one of the oldest known musical instruments.

Another moment of high religious fervor on Rosh Hashanah is the emotional chanting

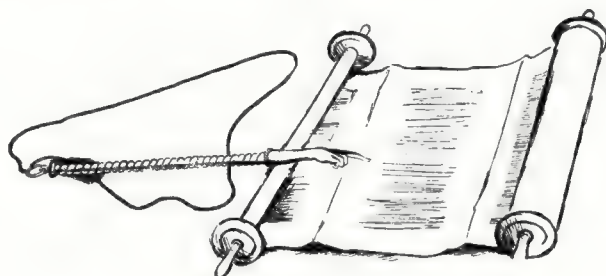
of a simple prayer which tells how the Almighty judges the world on this fearful day. "... it is true Thou art the Judge," the congregation intones. "Thou reprovest; Thou bearest witness, recordest and sealest; Thou also rememberest all things that seem to be forgotten . . . Thou numberest and countest and visitest every living soul, appointest the limitations of all Thy creatures, and recordest the sentence of their judgment:

"How many are to pass away, and how many are to come into existence; who are to perish by water and who by fire; who by the sword and who by hunger; who by earthquake and who by plague; who shall have repose and who shall be troubled; who shall be prosperous and who shall be afflicted; who shall become poor and who shall become rich; who shall be cast down and who shall be exalted. . . . But repentance, prayer and charity avert the evil decree."

The Ten Days of Penitence, a period of Divine grace, afford an opportunity to "avert the evil decree." Today, among pious Jews the world over, the contrite spirit of the High Holy Days deepens as Yom Kippur approaches. The synagogue is open every day for services; money is given to local charities; feuds and quarrels between neighbors and relatives are patched up, and the resolve is made to break bad habits and to correct the shortcomings of one's character.

Many years ago, the Jews of Eastern Europe, on the afternoon before the Day of Atonement, used to attend the symbolic ceremony of being "flogged" for their sins. The flogger, usually a poor man of the town who was paid for the task, (*Continued on page 80*)

Jewish congregations revere the star of David, the Torah pointer and the Torah itself—the Old Testament written on scrolls.







Some Like It Hot

*Regardless of the universal effects of movies, radio or television,
your regional tastes in entertainment cannot be changed!*

Ascant six weeks, or fifty-one performances, after it opened at the Ziegfeld Theater in New York one evening last September, a revue called "Ken Murray's Blackouts" suddenly announced that it was closing up shop because of poor business. On the face of things, there was nothing very remarkable about this. Shows are closing in New York all the time. Every week, or almost every week, some turkey folds, frequently after having been on display even more briefly than six weeks, but nobody, even the backers, wants, as the expression goes, to make a Federal case out of it. That, after all, is part of show business. The abrupt demise of "Blackouts," however, caused something more than casual comment, as well it might have done.

By the time it came into the Ziegfeld Theater on the evening of September 6, "Ken Murray's Blackouts" had, by virtue of a continuous run of seven years, or 3,844 performances, at the El Capitan Theater in Hollywood, become the most durable musical show in the history of any city—even more durable than "Oklahoma!" had been in New York, or "Chu Chin Chow" in London, or, for that matter, anything else anywhere else in the annals of the theater. Out in Hollywood, where it opened on June 24, 1942, "Blackouts" had been a constant delight, an unfailing pleasure. It had suffered war and celebrated peace, had gone through the dark days and was still doing business at the same old stand on the day they dropped the thing on Hiroshima. It had been produced for a piddling \$11,000 and had taken in some \$6,500,000. In Hollywood they thought it was simply wonderful, a great show. In New York, however, they thought it stunk, a real dog.

If all this proves anything, it is probably that show business is like no business, and that the very thing that had them rolling in the aisles in Omaha more than likely may lay a great big egg in Jersey City. *(Continued on page 68)*

BY GEORGE FRAZIER
ILLUSTRATED BY AL HIRSCHFELD

Tall, Shy And Handsome

BY JEROME BRONDFIELD

ILLUSTRATED BY MILTON WOLSKY

A SHORT SHORT STORY COMPLETE
IN THESE TWO PAGES



Gracie Forbes was quite convinced that the nicest walk in town was the five-block route between the bank and the Horner Novelty Company, where Gracie was assistant bookkeeper. It was a walk she looked forward to every Friday morning when she went for the payroll. Although it wasn't a huge sum—only a few thousand dollars—P. J. Horner insisted that as a long-respected merchant he was entitled to a police escort for Gracie.

So the captain down at the sixth precinct had picked Patrolman Tom Kane for the job, and in Gracie Forbes' opinion he couldn't have made a better choice. Patrolman Kane was tall and nice-looking, with a generous crop of freckles, and whenever he smiled Gracie would wish they had ten blocks to go, not five.

In the three months they'd been making the trip she'd learned a lot about him—that he'd been an MP in the Army; that he grew corn and tomatoes every summer in his yard; and that he was in line for promotion to detective third grade.

Gracie had decided very early that Tom Kane was something special, but she couldn't tell if she were making an impression. Although he often complimented her on something she wore, or laughed heartily at something she said, it wasn't very conclusive. Maybe he was just being nice—but not *especially* nice.

Once or twice he seemed on the verge of suggesting something more than their weekly walk, but nothing ever came of it. Just her imagination, probably. Maybe he was the slow, unaggressive kind who needed some prodding. The trouble was, she reflected gloomily, she wasn't the prodding kind. She'd been fighting her shyness for years with only moderate victories.

And now, today, this was to be the last walk. She wondered if she'd feel any worse than she did a week ago

when old P. J. Horner told her that, beginning the first of the month, all employees would be paid by check. Old P. J., with his red face and beetling, Mephistophelean brows, had, with a single decision, become the world's greatest ogre.

Gracie wore her new tweed suit and wool jersey blouse, and perched a red suede beret aslant her soft, short curls. Not that she really expected it to do any good, but the occasion seemed to call for it in a silent sort of way. But he noticed. "Say," he told her appraisingly, "you look like a full-page item in one of those classy fashion magazines."

"Why, Mr. Kane," she replied gayly, "you flatter me."

"Not at all, not at all," he insisted. And, as always, he failed to press an advantage.

She suddenly began hating the money in the bag under her arm. If it hadn't been for old P. J. and his money she wouldn't have met him, and this wouldn't be happening to her now.

Walking along muffled in her thoughts, it took a little time before she realized that a long silence had lapsed between them. Not a word for three blocks, almost. Then in front of her office she turned, trying to think of something to say. At first she debated whether to tell him there'd be no walk next week. But almost immediately she decided against it. He'd find out soon enough, and besides, she didn't feel she ought to. She wished fiercely that she could be a little more aggressive for a moment, like other girls. Someone else wouldn't find a thing wrong with it—would just tell him, without considering what he might think. But not Gracie Forbes. . . .

At the moment, however, she felt compelled to say something, if only the usual "thanks-very-much." She opened her lips, saw the funny expression on his face and stopped.



"Gracie," he blurted, "next week there'll be somebody else taking my place."

She looked up at him, not quite comprehending.

"I guess I'm a lucky guy," he went on. "That detective third grade came through sooner than I expected, and I'm being transferred to the fourth precinct."

"That's wonderful, Tom," she said, trying to pack her voice with enthusiasm. "I'm very glad for you."

"Thanks," he said. "Thanks a lot."

There was silence again. And then, suddenly, something inside her got up and pushed. Gracie Forbes had nothing to do with it; several thousand years of women-learning-how-to-be-women had done it for her. She only knew that she had to prolong this moment, keep him talking about it.

"I hope you enjoy your new work," she said, striving to be casual. "You'll probably welcome the change. You know—new faces, new places, new excitement."

If he heard her, he didn't appear to understand. He was looking at her oddly. "Uh—I'll miss Fridays," he said hesitantly.

"Oh, there'll always be Fridays," she told him lightly.

"Well, that isn't exactly what I mean—"

"No?" She regarded him coolly, but her heart was strictly be-bop.

"Gracie—" The word came out explosively, but Patrolman Kane was playing the course in par, and nothing followed it.

She waited a decent length of time and said, "Yes?"

"I don't know who it'll be," he rattled off on a tangent. "But I'm sure the captain will have someone there. At the bank," he bleated, clumsily tying up his loose ends.

"Oh, I'm sure."

"Probably Al Pinowski," he mumbled. "One of our rookies."

"I'm sure Mr. Pinowski will work out fine," she replied, almost hysterically. If he noticed anything strange, he gave no indication. He merely nodded.

She looked at her watch. He'd had all the chance in the world. There was nothing else she could do.

"Well—" she began with a note of parting finality. Her eyes were on a level with Patrolman Kane's Adam's apple, and she thought she saw it quiver. Then he said something, and the words seemed to tumble out all at once.

"GraciehowaboutFridaynightsinstead . . . ?"

When she finally decided that she'd heard right, she had to tighten the grip on her bag to keep it from slipping from her grasp. "Why, Tom," she said faintly. "You—you don't mean *every* Friday night. . . ."

He was grinning at her, and she imagined crazily that new freckles were popping out all over his face.

"Sure," he said. "Why not?"

"Well," she began a bit weakly, "maybe not *every* Friday night, but—" Her voice trailed off promisingly as she smiled up at him.

Patrolman Kane may have been a slow starter, but Gracie had an idea that once under way he'd pick up speed.

" . . . And I think we ought to begin this very night," he was saying, still grinning. "How about eight thirty . . . ?"

Two minutes later, Gracie Forbes collapsed just in time at her desk, her legs screaming a declaration of non-support.

P. J. Horner came by and peered at her queerly for an instant. She relaxed in her chair and smiled giddily at him as he passed. Cute old guy, she thought. With his pink cheeks and bushy eyebrows he looked just like a kewpie doll.

... THE END



Waited for, longed for, it

The Far Kiss

BY HARRIET SHIEK

ILLUSTRATED BY HARRY FREDMAN

It wasn't Carrie's voice that made him stand still, outside his apartment door, listening. It was the low, vibrant voice of Ann. Ann, whom he'd never touched, never kissed. With an ache that was almost physical, Mark thought, *If I could hold her once. Love her just once.*

Standing there, married to Carrie, and craving Ann, he tried to shake off the guilt which lived with him these days. He'd done nothing to feel guilty about, unless you counted thinking. Ann was never out of his mind.

He dragged in a deep breath and shoved the door open, walked into the living-room.

"Hello, darling!" Carrie cried and was instantly beside him, a welcome in her brown eyes and wide friendly smile. She planted a kiss on his mouth, then drew back and clasped her hands like an excited child. "I've found it, Mark!"

While she waited expectantly—he couldn't help it—he looked past her at Ann, sitting on the divan, her cloud of black hair framing her quiet lovely face.

Ann said, "Hello, Mark."

As always, he searched for some hidden significance in her simplest words. Sometimes he thought he sensed something; but he could never be sure. But . . . her gray-blue eyes turned away before his did. That always happened. It was the only thing he had to go on, the only fleeting tenuous assurance he'd ever had that she felt what he was feeling.

"Hello, Ann," he answered in what he hoped was the casual voice he would use with any neighbor. Absently, he turned back to Carrie. She was smiling at him in the little-girl way that used to make him rumple her fluff of yellow hair and say, "What's doing, Bunny?" He hadn't called her that for six months, since Ann and Walter had moved into the apartment building and he'd seen Ann for the first time.

He tried it now and got as far as, "What's doing . . . ?"

was the kiss of a woman in love. And then he looked into her eyes . . .

But he couldn't use the lovable pet name. He changed it to "What's doing, Carrie?" and dug in his pocket for his pipe. "What have you found?"

Carrie stood there, her hands in the pockets of her soft pink dress that made her look younger than usual. Three years of marriage hadn't changed Carrie. He didn't want anything to change her. She had to be bright-eyed and bubbling with life, or she wouldn't be Carrie.

"Our house, Mark!" she breathed, and her hands clutched his arm. "It's a darling! Ann went with me. We drove way out to Crescent Lake and there it was, just waiting!"

"Crescent Lake?" he asked and busied himself with his pipe.

Carrie went on, listing the beauties of the house, telling him every detail, but he heard only half of them. Before Ann had come into his life, he'd been just as anxious as Carrie to find a house. But now . . . He couldn't leave here now. Not with Ann living on the floor above. He knew what would happen if he and Carrie moved. They'd have Ann and Walt out for dinner a couple of times; then the friendship between them all would dwindle to phone calls, then Christmas cards, and in a year or so, they'd think of them as "neighbors we had once." As for seeing Ann by himself, calling her, meeting her in town, or anything like that, it wouldn't work. There were too many obstacles. There was Walt. And Carrie.

I should grab this way out, Mark thought. A prosaic mechanical thing like moving to a suburb would take me away from her, help me forget her. I could fight it better if I weren't around her. . . . But he felt reluctance rising in him. Fight it? He didn't want to fight it any longer.

When Carrie finally ran out of adjectives to describe the house, he said without looking at her, "Crescent Lake is too far out."

"But, Mark!" she wailed, releasing his arm. "Oodles of people live out there and commute to town. There's a bus right to your office." She looked up at him, caught his eye, and smiled the winning sweet smile that he usually couldn't resist. "Wait till you see the house, Mark—you'll love it. It's got everything!"

Everything but Ann's nearness, he thought, and looked away from Carrie's smile.

Awkwardly, he walked away from her and sat down in a chair facing Ann. He didn't look at Ann, but he was so aware of her he could have closed his eyes and known if she moved a finger.

"I'm sorry, Carrie," he sighed. "I just can't get interested in a house way out there."

Carrie frowned, standing alone where he'd left her. Her voice was puzzled, hurt. "You . . . you can't get interested in any house lately, it seems to me, Mark. There's always something. Not enough yard. Poor roof. Bathroom too small. I'm beginning to think you don't *want* a house, Mark."

That's true, honey, he thought. I'm one damn heel, but the last thing I want right now is a house.

"Let's not . . ." His gaze brushed across Ann, as though she were any guest. "Let's not go through this now, Carrie. Okay?"

Ann rose slowly, then bent over and snubbed out her cigarette in the copper ash tray.

She said, "I enjoyed the drive, Carrie, and—" Briefly, she glanced at Mark and her eyes were a deep sea-blue now, not gray. "Maybe he'll change his mind, Carrie, when he sees the house. It *is* sweet."

They walked with her to the door. "Walt and I would miss you both, if you moved, but . . . I don't blame you for wanting a house."

Did she mean anything by that? Was she telling him. *I'd miss you, Mark?* If only he could read her mind. If he could *know* what she was feeling. I'm a damn fool, he thought. How many men would act like this, hanging around like a sick dog, aching for something and not doing anything about it?

He'd had chances, dozens of them. How many times had he been alone with her and said nothing? Carrie and Walt were active people. When the four of them went dancing or bowling, those two always danced hard, played hard, while Mark and Ann took it easier and were content to sit on the sidelines, talking. None of it world-shattering, but her voice, her eyes, her smile, had made it all important to him.

He watched her now as she walked toward the stairway that led up to her apartment, and he called after her, reminding her of their Saturday-night bridge game tomorrow.

"I haven't forgotten," she answered.

Carrie said, "Might as well make it for supper, Ann. We're having Brunswick stew tomorrow night."

Ann thanked her, went upstairs.

Mark followed Carrie back into the apartment, closed the door, and stood there listening for Ann's footsteps above him. Yes, there they were. Soft. Muffled. But *there*. Not across a whole city.

Some day we'll move, he thought. Or they'll move. It's bound to happen. And every day that goes by is a wasted chance. Sometime tomorrow night, I'll be alone with her. I won't let another chance slip by.

But when the four of them had finished Carrie's spicy Brunswick stew the next night, and were sitting at the bridge table, he knew he was fumbling this chance, too. What could he do, what could he say, to get her alone?

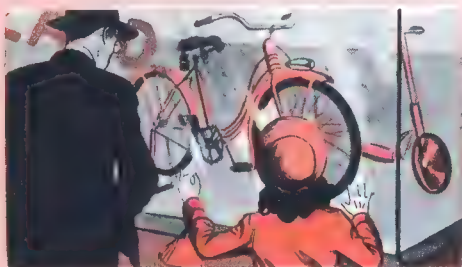
Walt, big and talkative, smoking his eternal cigar, filled the apartment with laughter when he and Carrie won the first rubber. He was a salesman, a likable guy, or would be, if he were anyone's husband but Ann's. Mark watched his big hands and thought, They've touched Ann a thousand times. He couldn't take his eyes away from those hands. They fascinated him. Big square hands. Touching her whenever they wanted to, holding her cheek, her shoulder. . . .

"Your bid, Mark!" (Continued on page 72)

PSYCHOLOGIST'S CASEBOOK NO. 6

BY DR. JOHN R. MARTIN

Can You Diagnose this Case?



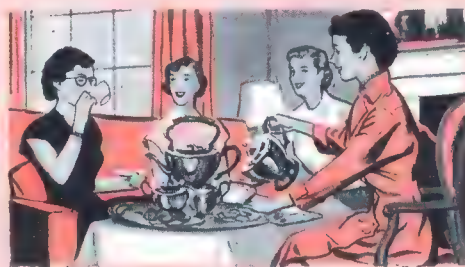
1. Evelyn, a clergyman's daughter, was devoted to her father. However, as a small girl Evelyn secretly wished that he were financially successful. The family was happy, but had to watch pennies to live within her father's salary.



2. As a high-school senior, Evelyn had two special boy friends. Bill helped in his father's shop, received no regular salary. He gave Evelyn a good time, but spent little on their dates. Harry worked in the bank, took her dancing regularly.



3. When Bill came to dinner, Evelyn was relaxed. She and Bill often did the dishes for her mother. With Harry, Evelyn never offered to help, acted as though a maid would clear up. Both boys wanted to marry her. Finally, she chose Harry.



4. After the honeymoon, Harry noticed that Evelyn exaggerated the price and style of the inn where they had stayed. Now she referred to his "position" at the bank, spent too much for clothes, nagged Harry to ask for a promotion.

"Miss High-and-Mighty" to the neighbors, a nagging wife at home. Must Evelyn's ambition destroy her marriage? She needs your help

CHECK YOUR DIAGNOSIS



- 1. Evelyn feels she will encourage Harry to be a success by showing him early in marriage the sort of life she expects to live. ☐
- 2. Evelyn is determined through her efforts to help Harry to achieve the financial success that had always eluded her father. ☐
- 3. Unselfishly interested in forwarding her husband's career, Evelyn is doing her best to help him win a promotion and a raise. ☐

Turn to page 72 for Dr. Martin's analysis and treatment

THE LEFT HAND OF GOD

The story thus far

JIM CARMODY, flyer, had been trapped in the service of the warlord MIEH YANG. It was adventure, and there was a half-caste girl, MARY YIN. . . . But Jim wanted to get away.

For this dangerous escape he found a strange and desperate chance. An American priest, PETER JOHN O'SHEA, was shot by Chinese. Before he died, he told Carmody he was en route to a remote mountain mission where they had no priest. Carmody donned Father O'Shea's clothes and, thus disguised, made his way to the mission.

He fancied suspicion in the hard eyes of DR. DAVID SIGMAN, the mission physician, and the studying gaze of BERYL, the doctor's wife. But no one questioned his identity. JOHN WONG, the sexton, became his devoted helper. And he fell in love (though he didn't know it) with ANNE SCOTT, a trained nurse.

As "Father O'Shea," he summoned fragments of memory from his Catholic upbringing to give last rites, receive confessions, even to say a Mass. Masquerading where masquerade was sacrilege, he was tormented by misgivings and remorse.

But at the most solemn moment of the Mass, suddenly the inner turmoil was over and he knew a strange peace. These people accepted him and trusted him; he would serve them while he could. They must never know him as an impostor nor learn that holy things had been profaned.

As he walked out of the church after the Mass, he saw a tall Moslem standing against a wall, a knife in his belt. "Who sent you?" Carmody challenged him. The man spat in the dust—and Jim knocked him down. He got up and ran away. Carmody eyed the fleeing figure, and his shoulders were straight. "Yang, of course," he said softly. "I wonder how much time he is permitting me to have."

His priestly rôle mocked him. Carmody was aware of Anne as a woman. Now his conscience dictated only one course—one that meant ultimate disgrace and humiliation

PART III

It started to rain on Monday, and it rained for eight days. Fog rose from the surface of the river and obscured the dark mass of the Two Sisters Mountain. The mission itself was an island in the fog, and lighted windows seemed to exist of themselves, with no relationship to the buildings which supported them. Miniature lakes formed on the mission grounds, and the duckboard walks floated gently, sinking with a squishing sound when stepped on. The sound of the rain became, itself, a wearing monotony. Through it all, the Chinese kept coming to the mission, as oblivious of the difficulties they encountered as they were of the fact that they brought puddles of water indoors with them and that their wet clothes gave off an evil-smelling steam which filled the rooms they visited.

The number of patients at the hospital clinic increased daily; the church, with John Wong presiding over the sorting and classification, was almost always half filled.

Carmody drove himself relentlessly, conscious that he was working against time, against a vague limit of time, and that these people, in their simple faith, had a just demand upon him. He had set himself up as a symbol, and they came to him. He could not turn any of them away. He had put self-debate aside, and he no

BY WILLIAM E. BARRETT

ILLUSTRATED BY AL BUELL





"Sing me your song, O!" her clear voice answered. His fingers quickened. This was fun. How long since he had sung with a woman?



"Just what do you mean, Father O'Shea?" the minister asked in amazement. "I mean I am not Father O'Shea."

longer weighed the reasons why he should, or should not, do this thing or that; whatever came to him, he did.

There was the list of John Wong. Couples traveled, some of them from incredible distances, in the rain, to be married, and they waited patiently in the church while Wong wrote their names in the book and checked his lists. Many of the brides were long pregnant, and, even to the scrupulous John Wong, this was a mere detail. A goodly percentage of these couples had come to the mission before, during the period when there was no priest, and had declared their intention, a declaration dutifully recorded in the book of Wong. One bowed to virtue in China and accepted necessity.

Carmody married them. He talked to them and advised them, stood facing them before the altar and had them repeat the vows, shaken by their sincerity, their unquestioning faith in him. He signed the marriage certificates then, and he did not know, in his own heart, if they were married—but he did know that they were more nearly married than the majority of their contemporaries, and that if there was anything

the matter with these marriages—as there must be in the eyes of the Holy Church—the fault was his own.

In the matter of the "baptizings," John Wong's list was conservative. There were many babies, far more than Wong knew about, and Carmody baptized them. He was on surer ground there. A layman may baptize where there is a danger of death, and through that loophole he moved with certitude. Each Chinese baby born was in danger of death, and from the moment of its birth.

The converts came, too, unsought; smiling, embarrassed men and women who wanted to come to the church and who had been told by neighbors that they must learn before they worshiped. In these people Carmody read the story of his growing reputation. On the back of one of Mich Yang's horses, he had treated such people as these with contempt; but, in the cassock, he had extended gestures of friendliness and liking, even of respect. So they came to him and they sent others.

John Wong lived in a state of visible and audible happiness. He hovered around Carmody, trying to anticipate any possible need of his.

"Many new Catholic," he said. "Word spread."

Carmody nodded. The word was certainly spreading.

Everything that he did seemed to grow into a legend, and as the legends grew, more and more people came in to see him, to listen to him, to register their reverence and respect for all that he represented. He had struck a Moslem bully, and that had been—purely and simply—the act of a warlord's lieutenant who had learned never to brook insolence from inferiors in rank; but the eyes of the beholders had seen righteous anger and the power of Holy Church. Jim Carmody, in the garments of Father Peter John O'Shea, could do no wrong. These people garlanded him with virtue and laid their sins upon him and brought him a child-like trust and looked at him with the shining eyes of faith. They wanted something greater than their own humble lives, something in which to glory, and he gave them that; abstractly in the mysteries of the church, concretely in his own person.

It frightened him at times, but just as one kind of danger sharpens a man's senses, so did the danger in which he lived sharpen his mind. The realization came to him that these people served him that he might, in his turn, serve them—and that this was the pattern of all life, not in China alone, but wherever men met men, in pride or in humility.

He studied the rising river when he went out on calls. If it continued to rise, it would be close to flood stage in a few weeks. It was a way in which a man might disappear. If, on some visit to an ill or dying Chinese, he should suddenly vanish, the fact of his having drowned in the river would need little corroborative evidence save, perhaps, his hat found somewhere in the rocks, his cassock washed ashore downstream.

It would be the kind and merciful and decent way—to leave these people with a priest to mourn, rather than with the knowledge that they had taken an impostor to their hearts. The rub in that was the fact of his continued existence after the "drowning." He would have to make his way, for many days and weeks, alone across the mountains. That, even without the surveillance of Mieh Yang's Moslems, was a well-nigh impossible task for any white man; and he knew it.

He tried to think his way through the problem when he was alone at night, but the circle of his thinking came back to Anne Scott.

He saw her frequently through the day, but he was alone with her only in his thoughts, the thoughts that moved in him along the borderline of sleep. He felt that he knew her better than he had ever known any girl, and that he did not know her at all. There was respect for his office in every contact that she had with him; yet—because she was companionable—there was a sense of comradeship, too. She had knelt beside him when an old man died on that first night in the mission, and she had walked beside him to the village. So many things since had fitted the pattern of

those two events, but it was a constricted pattern, incapable of expansion. There was no step forward that either of them could take.

"I could be in love with her," he told the silent walls. "She has what I want from life. It isn't just sex, either. I walked away from that when I walked away from Mary Yin."

There was a book in the bookcase that mocked him, and he had never taken it from the shelf. It was a black book with gold lettering on the binding. The title was "The Way of the Celibate." It was a way that he knew, without vows to bind him or natural restraints to hold him. There had been a reason, adequate to himself, for walking that way at the lamasery. The first law of nature is self-preservation. Reproduction of the species, with all of the drives inherent in that, is only second in the roll-call of man's instincts. The situation at the mission was different. His nature was not drawn by the thought of women, but by the thought of *a woman*.

He lay exhausted on his narrow bed, and Anne moved in all of his thoughts. As far as he was concerned, she had no past: she was of the present only. He did not know why she was in China. He knew only that whatever had happened to her in the past, the blending of character and experience was a happy one. She had the bright cheerfulness, the sparkling vitality that is born of physical well-being; at the same time, she had the quiet dignity, the attitude of devotion, that is a spiritual thing and rooted deep in soul. Yet Dr. Sigman said that she was a fool, and that went unexplained.

The Sigmans themselves could have so easily explained it.

On the evening of the eighth day of rain, they sat alone in their darkened living-room. There were two evenings, at most, in the week when they were both free to enjoy the doctor's hour of relaxation. Dr. Sigman sat deep in his chair, his legs straight out, a highball glass in his hand.

"You heard about those two porters who fell off the high road today?" he said. "Well, the wrong one died."

Beryl Sigman had her legs curled up under her. "What made him the wrong one?"

"I wish I'd known about him before. If I could have had him under observation for a while, I'd have had a paper. That monkey not only had his heart on the right side; he had an inverted stomach. Figure the odds against that combination!"

Beryl smiled. "Mass production, Dave. There is bound to be a slip-up here and there. What about the other one?"

"Standard Chinese construction. Not interesting at all. He was pretty badly scrambled, though. I had him on the table for an hour."

Beryl's interest was lazy. Her husband seldom talked about his cases, and she felt that she should show interest when he did, (*Continued on page 93*)

THIS IS THE LIFE !



Their own backyard is a playground for Kenny, three, and David, two years old. For evening ping-pong games the yard can be floodlighted.

BY JAMES F. SCHEER • PHOTOS BY ERNEST KLEINBERG—PIX

A house designed for comfortable living and a family to make that house a home—that was Carl Kessler's dream as far back as the early war years. But like most bachelors in those days, Carl wasn't doing much about making this particular dream come true—until he met Sybil.

Sybil Wolfe was the sister of a fellow officer at the Army airfield at Waco, Texas, where Carl was a flying instructor. After several week-ends spent at the Wolfes' ranch, Carl knew he had to make that dream of his come true, because he had found the one girl in the world he wanted to share it with.

After a tour of combat duty, Carl returned to

Texas to marry Sybil. He had grown up in Indiana, but thought he'd like to settle in Texas and have his own business. Then, he and Sybil could have the independence and security they both wanted.

Carl was fascinated by the vast ranches so common in Texas. One of the ranchers' perennial problems, he saw, was repairing or replacing wooden gates that sagged, warped or rotted. He began thinking about a substitute for these gates, and struck on strong, rust-proof, lightweight aluminum that would last a lifetime. Sybil shared his enthusiasm for the idea.

After leaving the service, Carl secured a GI loan. With this capital he bought war-surplus

MEET SYBIL AND CARL KESSLER OF MINERAL WELLS, TEXAS

Together they have built a successful business and a happy life!



A horse show and roping-contest is holiday fun for the Kesslers. Carl manufactures aluminum gates like the one he leans on here.

aluminum, and in a two-by-four shop near the Wolfes' ranch, he and Sybil began making gates by hand.

At first, everything went well for the Kesslers. They soon outgrew their small shop. In Mineral Wells, Texas, they found that the Army was offering for sale some property and buildings at Camp Wolters. Sybil and Carl were looking ahead. They had the feeling that a small community—Mineral Wells has a population of 10,000—is ideal for bringing up a family. The town is a health resort, and has excellent sports and entertainment facilities—public swimming pools, a lake and parks, fine churches, good bowling alleys and motion-picture theaters. The Kesslers are as enthusiastic about



A karakul lamb named Blackie, and Flieker, a cocker pup, are pets and playmates for the boys.



←
Sybil Kessler is an expert painter. Before her children were born, she used to help Carl keep up with orders for aluminum gates. Today, two boys are her full-time job.

→
Egg-throwing contests are popular at picnics that Sybil and Carl give for Alprodco employees. Partners toss eggs while moving apart. The farthest throw completed wins.

↓
Both Sybil and Carl like to fish for bass and catfish. They plan to build a summer cottage on a dam that will be built across the Brazos River, four miles from town.





The Kesslers chose Mineral Wells for their home town, because this Texas community looked like the ideal place to bring up a family

Mineral Wells today as they were the day they moved there. They like the warm, friendly atmosphere of the town, and their present plan is to stay there permanently.

Sybil and Carl invested everything they had in stocking and equipping their Mineral Wells plant for the mass production of aluminum gates. Orders were piling up waiting to be filled. And then one night, suddenly, their good luck left them.

At eleven o'clock on a black September night in 1948, Carl was awakened by the telephone. An excited operator told him that his factory was on fire. He didn't call Sybil; he didn't want to worry her. As he sped down the highway, Carl hoped that only part of the plant might be aflame. Hills obscured the factory from view. When Carl crossed over the last one, his heart fell. The entire building was ablaze, and nothing could be saved. Because the Kesslers had no safe, all records and books were burned, as well as more than \$20,000 in accounts receivable.

At first Carl and Sybil thought this was the end of their manufacturing enterprise. Then they began to realize that the only thing that could defeat them was accepting defeat. They began to look for ways of starting again. Today Carl and Sybil say they owed so many debts that they couldn't afford not to start over again.

Fortunately some of their raw materials had been stocked away from the factory. In three months of day and night work, Carl and his helpers rebuilt the large machines and were back in business. Not one customer had canceled his order.

In the two years since the fire, Sybil and Carl have expanded their plant, and built an attractive ranch-style home on two acres of land. There's a fenced-in backyard playground with a sand box, seesaw and swings for the two boys—Kenneth Ross, who is three years old, and David Keith, two. Here in the evenings Sybil and Carl play ping-pong under floodlights that make the yard as bright as day.

With all the Kesslers, a favorite feature of their home is a glassed-in, southern-exposure sunporch and playroom, finished in knotty pine. Housework is a pleasure for Sybil. Her rooms are large and easy to clean, her closets are broad and deep. She has automatic washers for clothes and dishes, and consequently has plenty of time to enjoy her knitting, gardening and church activities. Almost everything in the household has been mechanized by Carl to make life easier.

On Saturday nights the Kesslers usually join a few Mineral Wells couples for picnics, or dinner and dancing at the club. Several times each year Sybil and Carl play host to Alprodco's employees and their families at company parties.

A typical day in the Kessler household does not start with the harsh ringing of an alarm clock. Two little alarms named Kenny and Keith usually go off at 6:30 or 7. After a big, healthful breakfast, Carl, dressed in sports clothes or frequently in Army slacks, gets down to the factory—where he knows everyone by his first name—between 7:30 and 8:30.

On Sundays, after breakfast, the family drives a 1949 Ford station wagon to Sunday School at the Central Christian Church in Mineral Wells, where Sybil is a teacher and Carl a deacon. After church the Kesslers spread the comic sections on the floor of the big sunny playroom and read together.

The Kesslers are planning to build a summer cottage on a proposed new dam on the Brazos River four miles from town. They believe in the simple life. Like other young Americans, they have found that peace of mind and happiness are attained through faith in self, family, friends, country and God—through living each day as it comes with an even balance of work and play. Carl is now holding up production on a few new aluminum creations primarily to keep his work schedule from becoming overloaded. He wants as much time as he can get with his family. To this he adds that he doesn't want to be "the richest man in the graveyard."

... THE END



Sometimes, if a man sits in impartial judgment, he sees not only his side of marriage—but his wife's

It was six-thirty and November and already quite dark when Nick Williamson got off the train and joined the parade of commuters that nightly made its way from the station up Palmer Avenue and over toward the parkway, where most of the nice apartments were—men with newspapers rolled and thrust into their overcoat pockets, girls with big purses held against their armpits and chins drawn deep into their coat collars. The air was cold and hushed and heavy, as if expecting snow.

Nick Williamson, attorney-at-law, was distinguished in no way from the other males in the procession, except that his stride swung a little longer than the average, and his feelings were in a somewhat greater turmoil. Every time he made this little march, a sense of homecoming lit up inside him and burned brightly and warmed him until, as it always did lately,

BY JEROME ELLISON

Head of the House

By Rubin

it went out. Old habit-patterns die hard, and there had been a time when that feeling really meant something.

There was a time when the kids would watch from the window and come running to meet him, and walk with him a whole block, swarming around his legs and laughing and talking and being glad to see him. At home, Janet would kiss him in a flushed and offhand way and tell him, as she fussed over the dinner, everything that had gone wrong that day, but she'd be glad and relieved and perked up at seeing him, he could tell.

Everything had been all right, he told himself, turning toward the door of his apartment building, while Janet had been behaving a little bit like a wife. No, he thought, not a little bit. A lot.

Fuming, he jabbed his key into the lock of 7C—six rooms, three baths, kitchen and foyer, southern exposure. But before he could open the door, it opened itself.

"Evening, Mr. Williamson." It was Cora, the colored maid.

"Hello, Cora. Mrs. Williamson home yet?"

"Oh, she won't be home for dinner, Mr. Williamson," Cora said. "She phoned. Said she'd be home later. Maybe seven-thirty, maybe eight."

(Continued on page 89)

ILLUSTRATED BY HY RUBIN



And once in bed she dropped off to sleep in that exhausted way that always made him feel it would be an imposition to wake her.



Entertaining the Boss Without Tears

That first dinner for the boss can be a horror or a delight. But you can make it a victory by following these simple rules

BY LLEWELLYN MILLER
ILLUSTRATED BY TOM FUNK

One of the most important meals any young wife cooks is her first dinner for her husband's boss. Delicious food is essential, but it is not enough. Of equal, if not greater importance, is when that food is cooked and how it is served; because the boss is coming for something more than what is on the table. He doesn't invite you to his house, and doesn't accept your return invitation except for one reason—he has his eye on your husband and wants to know how the two of you impress his wife in your own home.

This means that your performance as a hostess is just as important as your performance as a cook. No matter

how wonderful your food is, your dinner will be a failure if you pay more attention to your stove than to your guests.

What you need is something that can be cooked in advance, left untended for the last hour and then whipped to the table steaming hot, beautiful to the eye, substantial and exotic all at the same time. It mustn't be so expensive that the boss will think you are extravagant, but it must have party trimmings. You must also be certain that your guests will enjoy it, so, somehow, you have to find out if the boss has a secret dyspepsia or if his wife is on a diet.

Don't burden your husband with investigation of this delicate matter. Call the boss's wife yourself and ask her if there is some dish that especially pleases her husband. She will be grateful for this chance to tell you their taboos, if any, and quite aware that you have sought information in a graceful fashion.

Now you are ready to plan your menu, and you will be wise to skip any first course other than canapés with cocktails. A first course is delightful, but it means that you have to pop in and out, changing plates and dishing up the main course, after everyone is seated. In the interest of being with guests who are there primarily to talk

with you, better concentrate on one stunning dish. Beef à la mode is one of the safest, prettiest and most delicious.

To prepare it, you first order four pounds of eye-round of beef. This is a piece of lean meat roughly cylindrical in shape. It is easy to carve because it has no bones. You won't eat four pounds at one meal, but it is excellent warmed over.

Let's say that your dinner is for Wednesday night and that you plan to sit down at about 7:30. Sometime Tuesday afternoon put the beef in a porcelain dish or enameled-lined pot. (Don't use tin, aluminum or steel because the metal will discolor the meat and change its flavor.) Choose a container not much bigger than the meat so that the glorious marinade you are going to soak it in will cover it fairly well.

M E N U

COCKTAILS • CANAPÉS

BEEF À LA MODE

CARROTS • POTATO BALLS • MUSHROOMS

LETTUCE WITH GREEN PEAS AND DILL DRESSING

HOT FRENCH BREAD

MARSHMALLOW PINEAPPLE MOUSSE

COFFEE

Here's the marinade:

two cups of dry red wine
one cup of canned consomme (undiluted)
two medium-sized onions, sliced
two cloves of garlic, chopped
two bay leaves
two cloves
one-quarter teaspoon of oregano (an Italian seasoning)
one-quarter teaspoon of celery seed
one-quarter teaspoon of freshly cracked white peppercorns
one teaspoon of salt

Don't worry about the effect of all of that wine. The alcohol steams away, leaving only the taste of grapes.

About two-thirty on Wednesday afternoon, take the meat out of the marinade. Sear it in a little fat until it is brown all over. Put it in a pan or casserole equipped with a tight cover. Pour the marinade over and bring it to a fast boil. Put the cover on. Simmer it in the oven for about two hours. Very slow cooking is the trick.

About five o'clock, make the gravy, so you won't have to worry about it at the last minute. Strain the liquid into a bowl. Throw away the bits of onion and other seasoning. Skim off all fat. Mix three tablespoons of fat with three tablespoons of flour. If you do this off the fire and add the strained liquid very slowly, the gravy will be smooth as cream. Stir it as it comes to a boil, and for two or three minutes after. Add salt, if needed. Put meat and gravy back in the covered pan; they don't need to be cooked any more.

Now let's get back to Wednesday morning and the dessert. Because the main course is a stout one, a delicate, light sweet is called for. One of the safest and fanciest is marshmallow pineapple mousse.

With the kitchen scissors, cut twenty marshmallows into little bits. Pour over one cup of very hot milk and stir until the marshmallows are dissolved. Set aside to cool. Beat one cup of whipping cream very stiff. Fold in the cooled marshmallow mixture. Drain the juice from a nine-ounce can of crushed pineapple. Fold in the fruit. Put the mixture in a pretty metal mold. Set it in the cold part of the refrigerator and forget it.

Now you are free until early afternoon when you start to fix everything else you are going to use. Scrape a bunch of carrots. Cut them in two and put them in salted water. You can save time and worry by using canned potato balls. Put them in a pan so you won't have to open cans at the last minute. Also, open a can of button mushrooms.

Wash and dry the lettuce. Roll it in a damp towel and put it in the refrigerator. Because the beef is highly spiced, it is only discreet to choose a simple salad dressing. But you might as well have a little fun with it, so use vinegar from a bottle of dill leaves instead of plain vinegar. It will give a tantalizingly different taste. (French dressing: one-half teaspoon of salt, one-fourth teaspoon of paprika, one level tablespoon of sugar, two tablespoons of vinegar, six tablespoons of olive oil, white pepper to your taste). Put the dressing in a jar with a top so that you can shake rather than stir just before serving, and tuck it into the refrigerator.

Cut the French bread. Butter it. Put it back in loaf shape and wrap it in the heavy silver foil that comes in kitchen-sized rolls.

Set up your husband's bar somewhere in the living-room so that he will stay out of the kitchen. Unless he knows what cocktails the guests prefer, set out gin, dry vermouth, whisky, sweet vermouth and bitters so that he can make either Martinis or Manhattans. Just to be on the safe side, have a bottle of dry sherry in case the boss's wife likes wine. You'll need Maraschino cherries with stems for Manhattans and cocktail onions or olives, speared with toothpicks, for Martinis. Now the bar is ready except for ice.

Set the table. Unmold the dessert. Sprinkle it with finely chopped pecans and put it back in the refrigerator on its serving dish. At 5:30 put frozen peas in a china bowl to thaw. Cook the carrots (about twenty minutes), drain and set aside to keep warm. By six you should be dressed, with half an hour to spare.

Put coffee and water in the pot. Get out the ice for the bar, put ice in a pitcher of water for the table glasses, and make the canapés. Squares of rye bread crowned with a dollop of cottage cheese topped with a few beads of red caviar are both festive looking and good, and will not dry out while waiting.

On a weekday night, two cocktails is all a wise couple will offer the boss. When the second round is served, slip out to the kitchen. Light the heat under the potatoes and mushrooms. Take the meat from the oven and put in the bread in its silver foil, turning up the flame somewhat. Break up the lettuce. Drop in the thawed peas (uncooked), shake the dressing and add as much as needed.

Put the beef on your biggest platter. The bigger the dish, the better the appearance. Slice the meat, not too thin. Pour the gravy over it. Space the bright carrots in a circle. Drain the potatoes and roll them between the carrots. Line up the mushroom buttons on top.

Light the fire under the coffee. Put the hot, crisp, buttery French bread on a dish. Take it to the table with the warmed plates. Light the candles as a sign that you are about to make an entrance. Then come in bearing your sensational offering of beef ringed with vegetables.

Watch the boss as the perfume of wine and spices beguiles him. Watch his wife's nod of approval at her first bite. Best of all, watch your husband's pride as he serves easily and gracefully.

The rest of the evening is your husband's chore. You know that you are going to bring your lovely desserts for him to serve while you clear. You know that coffee is bubbling, ready to be served in the living-room. Let him decide whether to suggest bridge or play records. Let him decide whether to offer a highball later in the evening or skip it.

You've done your part, so settle down and enjoy your success, confident that your grateful man can do no less than offer to help with the dishes. . . . THE END

Marco Comes Late

BY DR. SEUSS



1.

"Young man!" said Miss Block,
"It's Eleven O'clock!"



This school begins promptly at 8:45
Why, *this* is a terrible time to arrive!
What's wrong with you, boy? Is your head made of wood?
Why didn't you come just as fast as you could?
What *IS* your excuse? It had better be good!"

Marco looked at the clock.

Then he looked at Miss Block.

"Excuse . . . ?" Marco stuttered. "Er . . . well . . . well, you see
Er . . . Well, it's like this . . . Something happened to me.



3.

I heard a strange 'peep' and I took a quick look
And you know what I saw with the look that I took?
A bird laid an egg on my 'Rithmetic Book!

I couldn't believe it, Miss Block, but it's true!
I stopped and I didn't quite know what to do.
I didn't dare run and I didn't dare walk.
I didn't dare yell and I didn't dare talk.
I didn't dare sneeze and I didn't dare cough.
Because, if I did, I would knock the egg off.
So I stood there stock-still and it worried me pink.
Then my feet got quite tired and I sat down to think.



2.

This morning, Miss Block, when I left home for school,
I hurried off early according to rule.
I said when I started at quarter past eight
I *must* not, I *will* not, I *shall* not be late!
I'll be the first pupil to be in my seat.
Then *Bang!* Something happened on Mulberry Street!

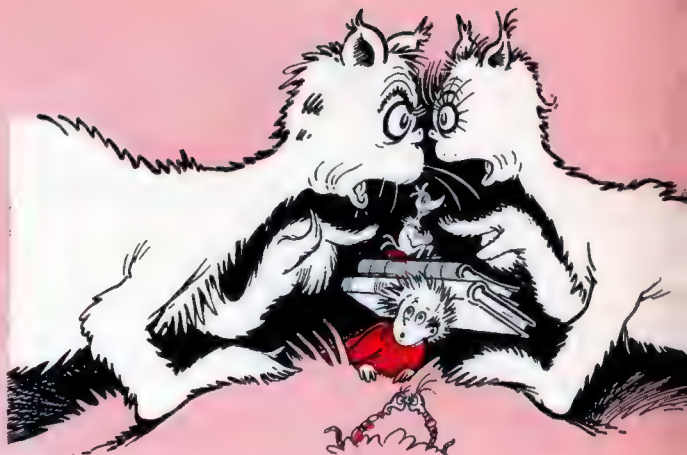


4.

And while I was thinking down there on the ground,
I saw something move and I heard a loud sound
Of a worm who was having a fight with his wife.
The most terrible fight that I've heard in my life!
The worm, he was yelling, 'That boy should not wait!
He *must* not, he *dare* not, he *shall* not be late!
That boy ought to smash that egg off of his head.'
Then the wife of the worm shouted back — and *she* said,
To break that dear egg would be terribly cruel.
An egg's more important than going to school.
That egg is that mother bird's pride and her joy.
If he smashes that egg, he's the world's meanest boy!"

5.

And while the worms argued 'bout what I should do
 A couple big cats started arguing, too!
 'You listen to me!' I heard one of them say,
 'If this boy doesn't go on to school right away
 Miss Block will be frightfully, horribly mad
 If the boy gets there late, she will punish the lad!
 Then the other cat snapped, 'I don't care if she does.
This boy must not move!' So I stayed where I was
 With the egg on my head, and my heart full of fears
 And the shouting of cats and of worms in my ears.



6.

Then, while I lay wondering when all this would stop
 The egg on my book burst apart with a **POP!**
 And out of the pieces of red and white shell
 Jumped a strange brand-new bird and he said with a yell,
 'I thank you, young fellow, you've been simply great.
 But, now that I'm hatched, you no longer need wait.
 I'm sorry, I kept you till 'leven o'clock.
 It's really my fault, You tell *that* to Miss Block.
 I wish you good luck and I bid you good day.'
 That's what the bird said. Then he fluttered away.

And *then* I got here just as fast as I could
 And that's my excuse and I think it's quite good."

7.

Miss Block didn't speak for a moment or two.
 Her eyes looked at Marco and looked him clean through.
 Then she smiled. "That's a very good tale, if it's true.
 Did *all* of those things *really* happen to you?"

"Er . . . well," answered Marco with sort of a squirm.
 "Not *quite* all, I guess. But I *did* see a worm."





(Continued from page 31)

about trim silken legs—and she was moving briskly and purposefully toward the bench on which he sat, rummaging in her handbag as she came.

The squirrel chirped impatiently, and absently Eddie tossed him another bit of sandwich without taking his fascinated gaze from the girl, and just then she came abreast of the bench and looked up from her handbag and saw Eddie for the first time. Her glance went swiftly from Eddie to the squirrel, whose bulging cheeks worked frantically while his beady gaze remained riveted on the remains of Eddie's sandwich, and the brisk tapping of her heels hesitated very briefly, and then she went on to the next bench and seated herself, extracting a paper sack from the cavernous interior of her handbag.

Eddie bit into his sandwich once more, watching the girl from the corner of his eye as he did so, and the squirrel shrieked his indignation. The girl took a nut from her paper sack, bent forward, and extended the nut enticingly toward the squirrel while she made a coaxing chirruping sound with her lips. Outraged, Eddie tore off a sizable chunk of his sandwich.

"Here you are, Junior," he offered generously, and tossed it. Whoever heard of anything so unprincipled as trying to seduce someone else's squirrel?

The girl continued to hold out her nut and to chirp, ignoring Eddie; and the squirrel continued to ignore the girl while he strove to cram the entire chunk of sandwich into his bulging cheeks. Eddie ignored no one; he watched the squirrel openly and the girl surreptitiously but nonetheless appreciatively, and calculated how long the remains of his lunch would continue to satisfy Junior's voracious appetite.

Carefully, he tore off another, smaller chunk, and the squirrel eyed it greedily while the girl on the next bench chirped pleadingly, unheeded.

"Liverwurst and Swiss cheese on rye," Eddie said dreamily, and tossed the morsel to his avid customer. "Ah, now *there* is fit fare for a discriminating squirrel!"

He thought he heard a faint disparaging sniff from the next bench, and then the coaxing chirrups were renewed, and Eddie raised his voice a little.

"And the faint spicy lingering taste of mayonnaise, eh, Junior?" he addressed the squirrel. "Who wants nuts, with such gourmet's fare about?"

That got results.

"I suppose it hasn't occurred to you," the girl said with frosty dignity, "that winter's coming on? It's all very well for Hugh to stuff on sandwiches and peanuts and popcorn every day now, but—"

"I don't do any such thing," Eddie said, startled.

"I said *Hugh*, not *you*," the girl condescended to explain, and pointed to the begging squirrel. Hastily, Eddie tossed another morsel of sandwich.

"I call him Hugh," the girl added, and Eddie said amiably:

"I call him Junior. Don't know why, exactly; I just started."

"I've been coming here every day," the girl said coldly. "I've known Hugh for a long time. I bring him hickory nuts."

"He doesn't seem to like 'em," Eddie commented, and the girl said indignantly:

"Of course he likes them, but that isn't the point. The point is that winter's coming, and there won't be any people in the park to feed him junk like sandwiches that won't keep, and he'll starve. He ought to be storing up hickory nuts right now, instead of just—just—"

"Eating liverwurst and Swiss cheese on rye," Eddie supplied. "I'd hardly call it junk."

"To a squirrel with a future to think of," the girl said stubbornly, "it's junk. Here, Hugh; here, Hughie."

She held out a handful of nuts enticingly and puckered her lips to chirp, and Eddie reeled dizzily. Even if he didn't like hickory nuts, Eddie thought, a squirrel ought to have sense enough to heed that siren call. Those lips, that musical coaxing voice, those—"Here, Junior," Eddie said thickly, and tossed the rest of his sandwich to the path, and stood up. The squirrel sprang for the sandwich, and the girl's soft lips tightened angrily, and Eddie said defiantly:

"I have to go back to work now, so you can start teaching Junior to be a frugal and substantial citizen." He hesitated, and added in conciliatory tones, "But you ought to remember that he's a

city squirrel, and the city stays open all winter. He can always get a handout."

"There's a word for people that think that way," the girl said icily as Eddie turned away. "Bum. You can see them down on the Bowery any day—people that don't bother to put anything aside for a rainy day, because they can always get a handout."

Eddie hastened his stride a little, and the girl's clear voice faded behind him. He had an absurd vision of a tattered gray squirrel panhandling on the Bowery, but somehow he didn't think he could convince this girl of its absurdity.

The next day, Tuesday, the weather continued unchanged, and Eddie had very little trouble persuading himself that he wasn't really hungry enough to enjoy a whole lunch anyway, and he might as well settle for a sandwich and some fresh air while he might. Tomorrow was payday, anyway, and Eddie's wallet was very thin indeed. As for the girl in the park—well, she really didn't enter into it, Eddie told himself; she probably wouldn't show up, after yesterday, and even if she did it wouldn't make any difference.

He couldn't have explained why he was striding along so briskly when he reached the park entrance, nor why he checked his stride to an elaborately casual saunter when he saw that the bench beneath the fourth tree on the right-hand side was already occupied. He strolled past the bench with his eyes carefully averted, and yet against his will he noticed several things: the crisply tailored suit today was powder-blue, and her eyes were blue, too—intensely blue; her expression was smugly triumphant. At her feet the gray squirrel variously known as Hugh and Junior was industriously inspecting a modest array of hickory nuts.

Eddie seated himself uneasily on the next bench and whistled unconcernedly as he unobtrusively extracted the sandwich from his pocket. He began to strip off the crackling wrapper—and the squirrel bounded gracefully over to sit upright before him and jerk an importunate bushy tail.

The hickory nut in his mouth impeded the squirrel's speech, and impatiently he dropped it to roll at Eddie's feet while he wispishly demanded his share of Eddie's lunch.

"Salami, Junior," Eddie murmured beatifically. "Salami with a slice of pickle, on gluten bread. A real treat; an epicure's delight. Here."

He tossed a corner of the sandwich to the path, and Junior pounced upon it; carelessly brushing the hickory nut aside as he did so. Eddie held his breath, sensing that the girl on the next bench was holding hers, too, while the squirrel examined the sandwich carefully, sampled it gingerly, and then began to eat with relish. Eddie let out his breath with a sigh and broke off another morsel, waiting to hear the coaxing chirrup from the next bench.

The chirrup didn't come, and presently Eddie risked a glance, and was filled with an unreasonable sick dismay. The bench was empty, except for a small paper sack and a few scattered hickory nuts, and the girl was walking, gracefully and with dignity, toward the Plaza.

Eddie half-rose, his mouth open to



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? ?

call out to her, and then he settled back disconsolately, his brief triumph suddenly tasteless. She hadn't looked like the kind to quit without a fight, he thought resentfully, and he hadn't really meant to be a bad influence on Junior. On Hugh. Well, on this fool squirrel, whatever his name was.

The squirrel sat up and scolded impatiently, and Eddie scowled at him.

"Winter's coming," Eddie said severely, and pointed to the next bench. "Go gather nuts, you dummy: You want to end up panhandling on the Bowery?"

The savor of the day was gone for Eddie, and he rose stiffly and set off, lunchless, for his office. As he left the park, he dropped the sandwich into a trash can.

Wednesday, for a wonder, the weather was still bracing and pleasant enough, although the temperature had dropped a threatening few degrees, and the promise of real cold just around the corner was firmer. Eddie didn't trouble to check his brisk and purposeful stride today as he entered the park; he went without hesitation toward the usual bench, observing only that she looked just as lovely in today's fawn-colored suit as she had in yesterday's powder-blue one.

Junior, or Hugh, nut in mouth, scurried hastily out of the way as Eddie approached, and the girl glanced up and at once dropped her gaze again, and began to gather up her handbag and gloves. She rose, and her lovely face was a frozen mask that looked through Eddie without acknowledging his existence, and the squirrel raced out into the path again and sat up at Eddie's feet, jerking his tail in greed and scolding jerklessly.

"Beat it, squirrel," Eddie said firmly. "I haven't got a thing for you. Not a thing. Miss—"

The girl had taken two quick tapping steps away, and Eddie caught up with one long stride.

"Miss," he said earnestly, "please. Look—I didn't bring any sandwiches or anything; honest I didn't. I'm—I'm not going to feed Junior any more. I've been thinking about him, and I think you're right, I think he ought to be thinking of his future. I only came to the park today for a breath of air, and I didn't—I don't want to drive you away—"

She had stopped, and she was looking directly at Eddie, and Eddie choked under the impact of those wide blue eyes.

"I—I thought," he said weakly, and suddenly felt that all was lost, "I—I just thought that—that, well, I haven't had any lunch, and I thought m-maybe you hadn't had time for any lunch, either. And I thought maybe, after you got through feeding Junior—uh—Hugh, maybe you'd have lunch with me, at the Plaza. I don't mean to be fresh, but I thought I could—uh—apologize to you, about—uh—"

She had a flashing white smile—a smile that made her look happy, and that made the wide blue eyes crinkle up at the corners.

"Why, that was *nice* of you," she said, and if she sounded faintly surprised that Eddie could actually be nice—well,



A wise mother soon learns that children can't always stay neat.

Don't See Too Much

Anxious parents are likely to get too close to their children and see too many mistakes, too much crudity, too much childishness, and in trying to make the child over to conform to their ideals of perfection, nag him to rebellion.

Children, being children, will be childish and get into trouble. They make mistakes and irritate mature people, and there is little to be done about that beyond a word of advice as needed, and an over-all tolerance that attends to the big things, the principles of behavior, while overlooking the little things that really do not matter. These little annoyances are expressions of passing stages of growth, often one-time errors that time and experience, coupled with wise leadership, will remedy.

Susie, aged four, twists a lock of hair about her finger and twines her left foot about the right. "Stop that, Susie!" Susie stops, untwines her feet and picks up a ball. "Put that right back. You know you can't play ball in the house." Susie seats herself on the floor and begins shoving her legs back and forth. "Susie! Will you go do something sensible and let me have a minute's peace?"

All that Susie needed at the start was a suggestion: "If you get out your paper dolls I'll help you start dressing some of them."

Give the child an acceptable occupation, and he will go along happily enough.

"Jimmy, how many times must I tell you not to slam doors? Look at that collar, fresh this morning! What's that in your pocket? Spoiling a perfectly good jacket I just paid seven dollars for! What was it you wanted? . . . No, certainly not. I don't like that boy in the first place—and you make too much noise and mess in the house, and I don't want him in here. . . . Where's your handkerchief? Will you ever learn?"

In time, Mother, in time. Don't see the wrinkled collar and the bulging pockets as more than a childish characteristic. Make allowances for boyhood and do it good-naturedly. Teach him by example to be neat and orderly, but don't expect too much too soon. Character-growth takes place in the inner self and so is hidden for a long time. By-and-by it will overflow in action, so teach and wait in faith.

To an anxious mother and father, a child looks like a mess of mistakes. Don't measure him against a standard of maturity but according to his stage of growth. Correct basic mistakes only; attend to establishing principles of behavior. The rest takes care of itself, given time and wise leadership.

BY ANGELO PATRI

ILLUSTRATED BY GEORGE WITHERS

Rome wasn't built in a day, was it? "But—the Plaza's somewhat expensive, isn't it? I don't think—"

There was a doubtful note in the musical voice, and Eddie said hurriedly, "I'm loaded, positively loaded." He hesitated, and under the wide blue candid gaze he added honestly, "Payday today."

"Well-I," the girl said slowly, and then, "all right."

"See you later, Junior," Eddie told the squirrel out of the corner of his mouth, but Junior was being Hugh again; he was off somewhere hiding a nut.

The food at the Plaza was very good indeed, the soft strains of string music seductive; and if it left Eddie on short rations for a week, what of it? Her name was Maggie—Maggie Grogan—and the more Eddie looked at her the prettier she was, and when those blue eyes crinkled at the corners in that happy smile she wasn't prim and cool at all.

"Tomorrow, the Bowery," Eddie said cheerfully. "But when you think there'll be today to remember—well, isn't it worth it, Maggie?"

"Eddie!" Maggie said reprovingly. "Of course not! What do you do, Eddie?"

"I'm an architect," Eddie told her, but there was something about Maggie that compelled honesty, and he corrected himself at once. "No, I'm not. Not yet. I'm a draftsman in an architect's office, that's all, but I'll be an architect some day. But isn't this swell, Maggie? Isn't it wonderful?"

"It's grand, Eddie," Maggie said sincerely, and smiled for him again, and Eddie was a millionaire for a moment. "But don't you—don't you ever want anything else? I mean, don't you ever get tired of—of the Plaza?"

"I don't get a chance," Eddie confessed. "I can't afford it that often. And the places I eat between paydays—yes, I get tired of them. But it isn't just food, Maggie; it's the music, and the atmosphere, and being here with you; it's—"

"Eddie," Maggie interrupted, and the blue eyes dropped and she was blushing becomingly, "Eddie, would you—would you like to have a—a home-cooked meal tonight? I mean, I—I'm not a very fancy cook, and I don't have a very big kitchen, so it won't be very g-good, but—if it would be a change for you, if you'd like it, Eddie—"

"Gosh," Eddie said. "Gosh, yes. Why, Maggie—"

"I—I have to go back to work now," Maggie said hurriedly. "I'm late already. You come down to the Village tonight, Eddie, if you don't mind taking potluck."

Eddie called for his check and paid it carelessly, and while they waited for his change a strange constrained silence fell over them. And then Maggie looked at Eddie and the corners of her blue eyes crinkled for him, and timidly Eddie put his hand lightly over hers, and then the waiter came back with Eddie's change, and everything was all right again.

The lobby of the midtown hotel in which Eddie Howard lived had never

looked particularly shabby to him before, but when he came home at the end of his day's work today there was something decidedly bleak and inhospitable about it. He rapped impatiently on the desk, and the bored clerk turned wearily, recognized him, and languidly tossed him his key. The gesture reminded Eddie of the way he tossed bits of sandwich to Junior, and he puffed his cheeks with

he resolved; next payday for sure—these things were a sight.

He cast one final glance at the room as he left, and the room stared back at him blankly. Strange that he hadn't noticed it before, but his room had a decidedly impersonal, almost inimical air; it wasn't much of a haven. *So long, Eddie, the room seemed to say casually, and if you don't come back there'll be someone else in here pretty soon, and then someone else after that.*

"And the heck with you, too," Eddie retorted.

"The Edge of Time"



By

LOULA GRACE ERDMAN

A novel that is the essence of the courage and independence of all young people who have faith in themselves—and in their country. *See page 105*

air and emitted a series of scolding chirps as he caught the key deftly and turned away, leaving the clerk frozen with shock.

"Winter's coming on," Eddie muttered as he entered the elevator, and tossed the key thoughtfully as the elevator boy slammed the door and retorted sourly, "Yeah? You don't say!"

"You ought to be storing up nuts," Eddie admonished the vision of Junior, and the elevator boy growled, "We got a houseful of 'em. Here's your floor. Your floor, Mr. Howard."

Half an hour later, bathed and shaved and dressed in his best suit, Eddie was scouring industriously at his shoes with a hotel towel. He had intended to buy new shoes out of this pay check, but his recent expenditures had postponed that project. Next payday,

Maggie had the table set when Eddie walked in with the bottle of inexpensive wine he had bought on the way, and he inhaled deeply as he glanced about appreciatively. There were candles on the table, and if the apartment was tiny it was nonetheless warm and friendly and hospitable. It certainly had a different feeling from Eddie's hotel room. And there was a delicious fragrance in the air, a fragrance like—like— Eddie sniffed hard, wrinkling his brow.

"It's only stew, Eddie," Maggie said apologetically. "I hope you don't mind. Would you put a record on the phonograph, please? Right over there—"

"Mind!" Eddie said from his heart. "Mind having stew! Maggie, do you know how long it's been since I even smelled a stew like that?"

He set a record on the turntable with care, and at once the muted music of a string quartet came into the room, and Maggie poked her head out of the tiny kitchenette and urged:

"Take your coat off, Eddie, and be comfortable. This won't be a fancy dinner, but at least it's at home; we don't have to be formal. Oh—" She came out into the room and picked up Eddie's offering. "Oh, is this wine, Eddie? You shouldn't have done that."

"Maggie," Eddie said, "where do you suppose Junior—that is, Hugh—sleeps in the winter?"

"Why, in a hole in a tree, I guess," Maggie answered, puzzled. "Will you open the wine, Eddie, while I serve the stew?"

Eddie waited until she emerged from the kitchenette once more, bearing savory steaming plates, and then diffidently he asked, "Do you suppose he has just one hole all his own, Maggie, or does he just duck into the nearest hole at night?"

"Why, of course he has one particular home of his own," Maggie answered scornfully. "Everybody's got a home—even squirrels. Why would he just duck into the nearest hole, if he had one of his own all lined with leaves and everything, and a pantry full of nuts right there?"

"Of course," Eddie agreed quietly. "Gee, this is delicious, Maggie."

"You eat every bit of it," Maggie said sternly, "or I'll make you do the dishes."

"Don't worry," Eddie said. "I'll eat all there is of this. But I'm going to do the dishes anyway. I want to."

"You can help," Maggie said. "We'll do them together. You're a nice guest, Eddie. I like having company."

And so it happened that on Thurs-

LUCILLE BALL, starring in Columbia Pictures' "THE FULLER BRUSH GIRL"



Lucille Ball, too, chooses EASTERLING Sterling

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THE EASTERLING COMPANY, 330 South Wells Street, Chicago 6, Illinois



The most exciting news in many, many months, if not, indeed, in years, is that Columbia has brought out a small machine which will play 33 $\frac{1}{3}$'s—7-, 10- and 12-inch records—automatically by merely attaching it to one's radio or phonograph. As if this were not enough of a blessing in itself, there is an added inducement in the fact that the machine, which is a handsome, compact little fellow, costs only \$16.95. The obvious implication of this is that one can now hear hours of continuous music for \$16.95 plus the cost of long-playing records themselves. What may not be so apparent, however, is that the availability of such an instrument provides a remarkable shot in the arm for the sale of Columbia's 7-inch 33 $\frac{1}{3}$'s. In other words, it would now appear logical (since RCA Victor is producing 33 $\frac{1}{3}$'s) for all the companies to concentrate on this speed.

Among a large batch of 33's (which is what 33 $\frac{1}{3}$'s are now generally called) out this month, the following are well worth your time: "East Side Rendezvous" (Columbia CL 6112) which presents a superlative pianist named **Bernie Leighton** toying in fetching fashion with such memorabilia as "Please," "Stella by Starlight," "Mean to

Me," "Laura," "Don't Blame Me," and "Nice Work if You Can Get It." "April in Paris" (Decca DL 5259) in which **Victor Young** and, as the label says, "His Singing Strings," achieve wonders with a Gallic potpourri featuring "Comme Ci, Comme Ca," "The River Seine," "Beyond the Sea," "Pigalle," and the exquisite "La Vie en Rose."

And Bing Crosby Volume 2 (Brunswick BL 58001), in which the Groaner—circa 1932—exerts his old black magic with things like "At Your Command," "I Apologize," "A Faded Summer Love," "Sweet and Lovely," "Many Happy Returns of the Day," and "Dancing in the Dark."

You also better investigate several other Brunswick 33 reissues, notably the **Art Tatum Trio** (BL 58013), **Louis Armstrong** (BL 58004), **Red Nichols I and II** (BL 58008 and 58009, and the **New Orleans Rhythm Kings** (BL 58011).

Since it is now a simple and inexpensive matter to play Columbia 7-inchers, you might investigate **Mitch Miller's** "Tzena Tzena Tzena" (1-706), **Burl Ives'** "Lady from Laramie" (1-686), **Robert Q. Lewis'** "Steven Got Even" (1-696), and **Una Mae Carlisle's** "Tired Hands" (1-683).



BERNIE LEIGHTON



ARTHUR GODFREY AND NEW RECORD PLAYER

day morning, which dawned clear and cold with the fulfillment of the promise of winter's coming, Eddie Howard wasn't much good at his drawing-board. Finally the hands of the clock crawled around to lunchtime, and Eddie bolted out of the office to attend to an errand he'd been thinking about all morning.

As it turned out, Eddie's errand consumed more time than he had counted on, and it was fully half an hour past his usual time when he hurried, panting, into the park. He saw with relief that Maggie was in her accustomed place.

"Gosh," Eddie said breathlessly, "I'm late. I'm sorry. I'm glad you waited. I— Say, where's Hugh?"

"Junior," Maggie said grimly, and emphasized the name, "is right over there. I'm afraid he's incorrigible, Eddie. I'm afraid he's going to become a Bowery bum of a squirrel."

Eddie followed her pointing finger, and slowly he began to grin. Three benches down the path a gray little man was sitting with a lunch box on his knees, and in the path before him sat a gray squirrel, feathery tail jerking, cheeks bulging, emitting muffled chirps of greed.

"Oh, no, he isn't," Eddie said firmly. "Not that squirrel. Not after the trouble I've been to. Come on, Maggie."

He heard the brisk tap of Maggie's heels behind him, and the sound was comforting as he strode swiftly to the bench on which the gray little man sat and sternly addressed its occupant.

"See here," Eddie said severely. "Don't you know you shouldn't be feeding that squirrel that stuff? Winter's coming on, and he's going to have a tough time unless he's got a little something put by. He ought to be storing up a bunch of nuts; something that'll keep, something for a rainy day—"

The gray little man stared in consternation, and then swiftly he gathered up his lunch and departed, glancing apprehensively over his shoulder as he went. Eddie grinned, and waved Maggie to a seat on the vacated bench, and addressed himself to the squirrel.

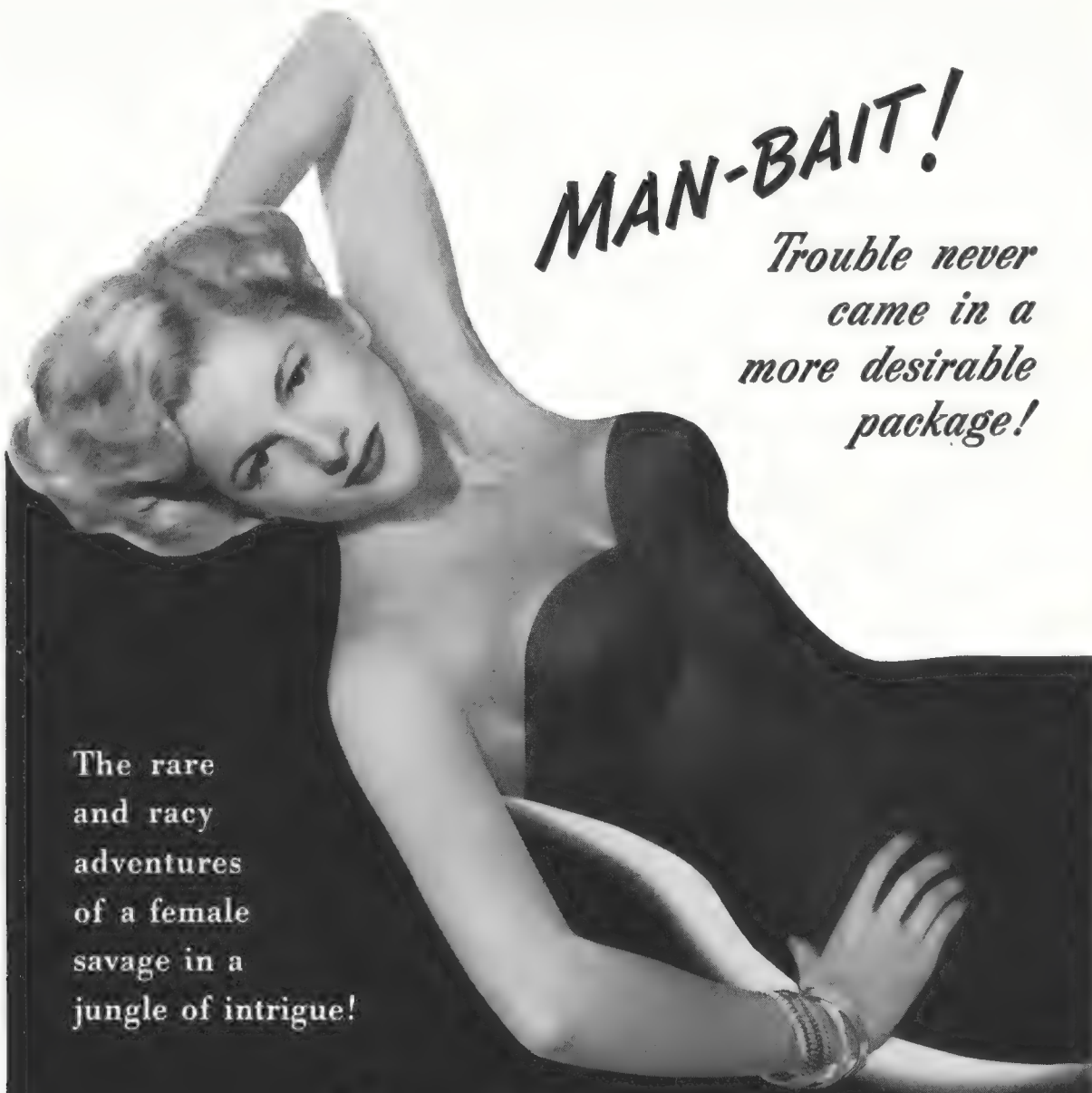
"Hughie, m'boy," Eddie said sternly, "there will be no more sandwiches and such truck for you. Maggie knows what's good for you, and you take it. Go on, now."

The squirrel swore bitterly at Eddie, and resignedly bounced over to take a hickory nut from Maggie's fingers, and shot away to hide it, giving Eddie a very dirty look over his shoulder as he went.

"I've been all over New York this past half-hour," Eddie said to Maggie, dragging a small paper sack from his pocket, "and not a hickory nut could I find. But the man said filberts would keep all right wherever a squirrel would store 'em, he thought. He said he didn't know any squirrels to speak of, but he was pretty sure filberts would be a good bet. You think it would be all right to give Hugh a few filberts, Maggie?"

"I think so, Eddie," Maggie said softly, "and in the spring, when the winter's over—well, we could feed him sandwiches again, Eddie. I think he'd like that, and it wouldn't do him any harm in the spring."

... THE END



MAN-BAIT!

*Trouble never
came in a
more desirable
package!*

The rare
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adventures
of a female
savage in a
jungle of intrigue!

JOAN FONTAINE
ROBERT RYAN • ZACHARY SCOTT

"Born to be Bad"

and JOAN LESLIE • MEL FERRER



Produced by Robert Sparks • Directed by Nicholas Ray • Screenplay by Edith Sommer



There's one little girl who will be doubly proud of this chair—because it belonged to Daddy, and he fixed it up specially for her.



Silk screening is one of the most popular decorative arts, easy to learn. Design is reproduced in color by a stencil process.

Beginners, as well as advanced sculpture students, model from life. Elementary instruction is given in all handcraft courses.



Arts and Crafts are back—in a big way! Here's a community that's showing young people how they can get the most out of leisure hours

PHOTOS BY HANS KNOPF—PIX

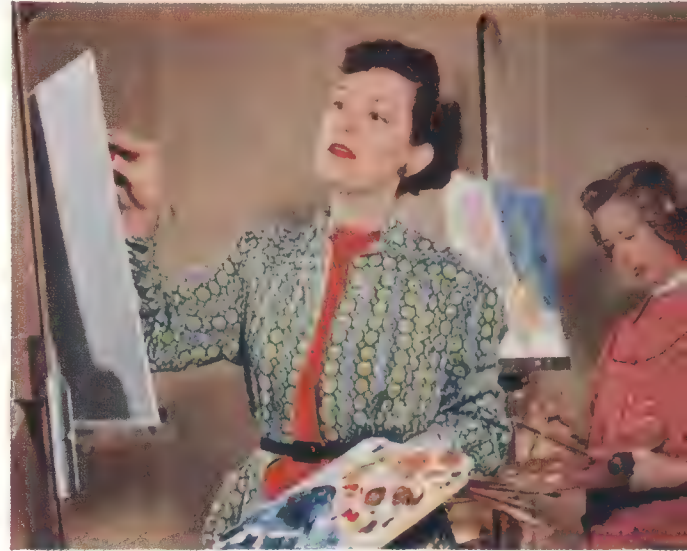
This evening all over America young folks are gathering in community meeting-places. They are handcrafters, leaders in a great new movement that's abroad in the land.

The Westchester Workshop at White Plains, New York, is typical of many hand-

craft centers. Sponsored by the Westchester County Recreation Commission, the Workshop this year has enrolled more than seven hundred County residents in each of its two terms. Here's a pattern for creative recreation that any alert community can follow!



Jewelry and art metal work is the specialty of Charlotte Kizer, Workshop director. In thirty-six classroom hours students learn to design and make attractive ornamental jewelry.



Many husbands and wives share an interest in oil painting, enroll together in one of eight Workshop courses. Instruction fees in all subjects come to less than one dollar an hour.

Handcrafters who have graduated in dressmaking and tailoring often find that this skill which they have developed for fun can be turned into a profitable spare-time business.

Weaving holds a fascination for both men and women. At creating and designing patterns the ladies excel, but men are more expert at operating the mechanically intricate loom.





(Continued from page 39)

To each section of the country, its own entertainment fare.

There was, for example, the case of "Good Night, Ladies," a farce which, when you looked close, was reminiscent of "Ladies' Night in a Turkish Bath" with the innovations of electric steam cabinets and Skeets Gallagher. Produced in 1942 for a shoestring \$5,800, "Good Night, Ladies" proved such a pet with Chicagoans that it remained in their midst for one hundred weeks, or 897 performances, and enriched its two sponsors with a profit well in excess of \$650,000. When this run finally came to an end, the show was put on the road, where it continued to make a good deal of money week after week. Then, in January, 1945, its producers decided that it would not be fair to deprive New York of the opportunity to witness this milestone in the decline of American drama. For all its munificence, this move was a sad mistake. "Good Night, Ladies" was such a flop in Manhattan that it was barely able to totter its creaky way through seventy-eight painful performances.

Here, as vaudevillians who had just laid an egg at the Palace were wont to say, was a case of "You shoulda caught me in Dubuque." Whether or not the vaudevillians were right about this was always open to question, but there can be no doubting that you shoulda caught "Good Night, Ladies" in Chicago and "Blackouts" in Hollywood. Tastes in entertainment, it would seem, are not the same everywhere.

This was the subject to which W. C. Fields accorded a great deal of serious thought through the years. In his case, the problems happened to be Washington, Kansas City and St. Louis.

"They are the igloos of the theatrical world," Fields once remarked about these three municipalities, which had been relentlessly unresponsive to his unique talents. "Even the managers in those communities never know whether to give their patrons Sarah Bernhardt or trained seals."

The more deeply Fields considered the matter, the more confused he became. But, according to Robert Lewis Taylor, one of his most observant biographers, he did eventually arrive at one enlightening conclusion, which was that city people and country folk showed a sharp cleavage when it came to understanding certain allusive jokes. "For a while," says Taylor, "Fields encountered some embarrassing silences in the small towns with a routine involving subway straps. Conversely, he had many bad moments in New York when he tossed off the word 'switchel bucket,' which struck him as funny. Of this mishap, he said, 'I finally

learned that the average New Yorker would have to go to the dictionary to find out what a switchel bucket was; even though Calvin Coolidge was some day to present one to the Prince of Wales.'"

The implications of this still hold true. To the average New Yorker, for example, the names of such people as Frankie Yankovic and Homer & Jethro mean practically nothing. By the same token, however, folks out in Milwaukee, or down in the hillbilly territory, can hardly be expected to become ecstatic at the mere mention of, say, Tommy Lyman, Cy Walter, Sadie Banks, or either of the three men named Eddie Davis, all of whom have achieved prominence of one sort or another. Then there are Menasha Skulnik and Molly Picon, both of whom should, as the vaudevillians put it, be caught in New York. Although no one is disposed to dispute the fact that difference of opinion is what makes the world go around, there is some reason to believe that, for all its stimulus, it cannot be counted upon to provide much assistance to anyone grappling with the problem of presenting entertainment that will have national appeal.

All of which is why radio executives acquire nervous tics as they sit tensely in their Manhattan towers and ponder people's preferences. Why is it, they wonder, that a lovable, expert comedy team like Burns and Allen has a smaller audience than less publicized programs? And who, they also wonder, listens to a program called "Grand Ole Opry," which is to be heard over NBC every Saturday night from 10:30 to 11? Somebody must listen to it, but who? One does not hear people discussing it in the Stork Club.

Well, first of all, somebody must listen to "Grand Ole Opry," because it is, among other things, the oldest continuous program on the air, having made its debut in November, 1925. And furthermore, R. J. Reynolds would not be sponsoring it if nobody listened. As a matter of fact, millions of people not only listen to it, but, what is even more significant, do so with vast pleasure. Roughly speaking, these people are concentrated in Nashville, Tennessee, where more than 5,000 of them gather in a huge auditorium every Saturday night and revel in a four-hour performance. "Grand Ole Opry" is sectional entertainment, and anyone who thinks otherwise should catch it in Nashville. The fact that such people as Red Foley, Roy Acuff, Rod Brasfield and Minnie Pearl, all of whom have appeared on the show at one time or another, might have some difficulty in Manhattan does not disparage their exalted standing among their own people.

Among their own people, indeed, these exponents of country, or folk music (which is a more proper designation than hillbilly) are far more popular than a Crosby or a Sinatra. People like Elton Britt, Eddy Arnold, Charlie Munroe and the Blue Sky Boys, to list a few names that immediately suggest themselves, may not mean many nickels to the jukeboxes of the big cities, but you should catch them on their home grounds, which can be roughly defined as North and South Carolina, Virginia, Kentucky, Georgia,

Tennessee, northern Florida, and certain parts of West Virginia and Arkansas. Some of these artists' recordings sell prodigiously. Eddy Arnold, for example, is one of the three best-selling artists in the entire RCA Victor catalogue, while Elton Britt's "There's a Star-Spangled Banner Still Waving" of a few years ago ranks among the most phenomenal sellers of all time. (The most phenomenal, incidentally, was the Okeh "Laughing Record.")

Country music, as is obvious from such samples as the Britt sensation and the reverse side, "I'm a Convict with Old Glory in My Heart," is basically narrative and tells a story which, more often than not, is a sad one. In many instances, it takes actual events—"The Death of Floyd Collins," for example—and wrings every last tear out of them. A further distinction of country music is that its practitioners seldom yodel. It was something of a minor scandal, in fact, when Elton Britt began to do so a few years ago. Not long ago, he debased himself even more by not merely yodeling, but by doing so in a selection from a Broadway show, "Yodel Blues" from "Texas, Li'l Darlin'." Lovers of country music take such disgraceful behavior quite seriously, and are inclined to repudiate it with all the vehemence they accord ballad singers on the order of Josh White, Burl Ives and Richard Dyer-Bennet, all of whom they dismiss contemptuously as pets of the arty people who frequent a cellar cabaret in New York called the Village Vanguard.

In addition to country-style, folk music also embraces the so-called Western type, which is exemplified in the work of Tex Ritter, Cisco Huston, Tex Williams, the Sons of the Pioneers, Bill Boyd (not to be confused with the *Hop-along Cassidy* Bill Boyd) and, to a more specious degree, Roy Rogers and Gene Autry. At its best, Western music is characterized by a rock-solid rhythm which is a sheer delight to its partisans, most of whom live in Texas, Oklahoma and parts of California.

On the whole, Western performers are not inclined to regard their work as uncompromisingly as country singers do, a fact which explains Gene Autry's doing a number as eclectic as "Rudolph the Red-Nosed Reindeer." For another thing, they are apt to be considerably less dolorous than the Ernest Tubbs, the Elton Britt, the Eddy Arnolds and the other heroes of country-style followers.

On occasion, they even achieve the stature of satirists, as Tex Williams did in "Smoke, Smoke, Smoke," which was a national best-seller, and in his more recent "With Men Who Know Tobacco Best, It's Women Two to One." For all his ingratiating talents, however, Williams usually has a circumscribed appeal, which, while strongest in such assertively Western states as Texas, Oklahoma and California, also exerts itself in the Rocky Mountain area.

The Rocky Mountain area, as a matter of fact, provides a pretty good example of how fiercely regional tastes in entertainment can withstand outside influences. Denver is a case in point. Although this thriving city is becoming

progressively more sophisticated, it is at its happiest—and, for that matter, most captivating—when it reverts to its frontier turn of mind. At any rate, the big time in this city is not when its symphony orchestra opens its season, not when a Broadway hit reaches town, but when the yipees of the rodeo are heard in the streets. This is the feeling that prevails throughout the whole Rocky Mountain area.

This mountain area, however, is one place where nobody should catch a man named Frankie Yankovic. Frankie, to what may well be the enlightenment of millions of people, is a personable young man whose Columbia recording of "Blue Skirt Waltz" sold more than a million copies last year and was second only to that firm's "Rudolph the Red-Nosed Reindeer" by Gene Autry. At the moment, Yankovic leads what is far and away the most popular polka band in the country.

Although his name is practically unknown in the big cities, Yankovic is quite a man in the area between Harrisburg and Milwaukee. Of the million copies of "Blue Skirt Waltz" which were sold, at least two-thirds of them were disposed of by four Columbia distributors—the ones in Pittsburgh, Cleveland, Milwaukee and Minneapolis. This should be adequate proof that the polka has a certain imposing geographical following. Oddly enough, however, even polka devotees are not all of a single mind.

Yankovic's band is not a Polish polka group, but a Slovenian one. As such, it uses only five men—two accordions, a string bass, a banjo and a piano. Both Yankovic, who plays accordion, and his pianist double on the Solovox, each playing it with his right hand. The vocals are usually done, not by a single singer, but by Yankovic and another member of the group. Inasmuch as the band plays one-nighters almost exclusively, and to vast crowds, its profit is probably bigger than that of any ensemble now in business. Musically, it also has its points. The most important of these is its terrific beat, which is chiefly attributable to its banjoist, who is in a class with the men who played the instrument with some of the great jazz bands of other years. Indeed, this beat may be the principal reason why none of the hundreds of imitators of the Yankovic style has never been able to approach its popularity.

It is one of the most arresting features of sectional entertainment that Yankovic, for all his extraordinary appeal, is not the favorite polka specialist among people who live in the Hartford-Waterbury part of Connecticut. The man who appears to hold that distinction at the moment is Walt Solek, whose band plays Polish polkas and has the shrill sound imparted by three reeds, three rhythm instruments, two trumpets and accordion, which play mostly in the upper register. Solek, who now records for Columbia, scored his major success on records with "My Girl Friend Julaida," which sold 300,000 copies on the Harmonia label.

Not since the rambunctious days when Frank and Milt Britton were smashing violins over each other's heads has any leader carried on as outrageously as



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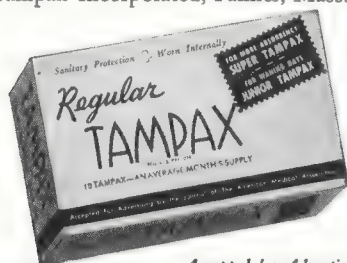
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Solek does when he gets up onto the stage in a Connecticut Valley dance-hall and proceeds to captivate his Polish neighbors by singing, dancing, getting in and out of a succession of outlandish folk costumes, and trying on a giddy assortment of hats which would make even Hedda Hopper self-conscious. Solek's circumscribed success—like that of, say, the Six Fat Dutchmen (ten, not six men), whose ponderous, oom-pah polka beat wows 'em out in Wisconsin, and of Carlo Butti, an Italian tenor whose Columbia records, although unknown by the public at large, are big sellers in United States communities with predominantly Neapolitan populations—is a pretty persuasive argument in favor of the theory which holds that it is far, far better to be a big fish in a small pond than a minnow in the sea.

Many a performer who has set out to demonstrate otherwise has had ample cause to deplore his impetuosity. For not only are there sectional, or geographical, favorites like Frankie Yankovic and His Yanks, whose old Slovenian magic exerts its spell all the way from Harrisburg to Milwaukee, but there are also entertainers whose peculiar endowments apparently appeal solely to certain areas or peoples. Indeed, in the entire United States, only the Pacific Northwest appears to be devoid of pronounced feelings about entertainment. Oregon and Washington, for example, have such peculiarly restricting liquor regulations that cabarets have no real reason for being. As a consequence, so-called "bottle clubs," i.e., private establishments where one keeps his own liquor for use when he drops in, are the order of the night. In view of this lack of public entertainment, it is hardly surprising that the Pacific Northwest should be a great place for amateur theatricals.

Almost everywhere else, though, people have their likes and dislikes. Manhattan, as one might expect, can supply plenty of evidence of this.

Away up in the Bronx, for example, there is a theater called the Puerto Rico. Most New Yorkers are not even aware of its existence. It so happens, however, that, week in, week out, the Puerto Rico does a lot better business than many a celebrated midtown playhouse. Last March, for instance, the Puerto Rico was taking in more than \$40,000 a week, with the result that its gross exceeded that of all Broadway theaters except the two which housed "Kiss Me, Kate" and "As the Girls Go." Everything considered, this was no surprise. Drawing its trade from among the 230,000-or-so Puerto Ricans who reside in that section, the house thinks nothing of paying an attraction \$10,000 a week to inspire wild *olé*s. Yet for all their love of entertainment, it is doubtful if the Puerto Rico's patrons have ever heard of either Molly Picon or Menasha Skulnik, both of whom do their stuff only a twenty minutes' subway ride downtown.

Second Avenue, on the lower East Side of the city, is Miss Picon's and Mr. Skulnik's "Dubuque," and that is where they should be caught. Miss Picon, who is known as "the Sweetheart of Second Avenue," made her debut a quarter of a century ago on the stage of the Second

Avenue Theater, and although she is hardly more than a name to the posh set which is engaged in the care and feeding of toy pandas, she is still doing business at the same old stand, and packing them in, too. For that matter, the Café Society crowd probably does not know much about Menasha Skulnik, either. Along Second Avenue, however, Menasha is quite a man. His popularity is such, in fact, that the theater has never had a losing week with him on the bill. On the other hand, however, there is no reason to think that the devotees of Skulnik's and Miss Picon's art would be the least bit impressed by the likes of Tommy Lyman, Cy Walter or the three men named Eddie Davis.

Two of these Eddies you need not worry about, except possibly to keep matters from getting into the realm of total confusion. At any rate, one is a former taxi driver whose lively wit enabled him to become the librettist for several of those big, brassy, girly extravaganzas which were something of a rage until Rodgers and Hammerstein decided to put their heads together. The second Eddie Davis owns Leon & Eddie's, a West Fifty-second Street nightery which he enlivens from time to time by deciding to sing a little song, or, as he himself might say, do a little number. This Eddie Davis is what you would call a sectional entertainer, a man whose raffish romantic protestations would indubitably fall on deaf ears if they were intoned in Bismarck, North Dakota. It is the third Eddie Davis who concerns us here.

The importance of this Eddie Davis, the third Eddie Davis, is that he handsomely serves the purpose of proving that even a bandleader can belong to a particular section of a city. For more years than either he or anybody can remember, this Mr. Davis, who is plump, bald and bland, has been providing dance music for the pleasure of certain affluent New Yorkers. As music goes, his is hardly the best—not, at any rate, if one examines it with an ear to the barrelhouse values of an Ellington or a Basie or a Goodman. But as music goes, Eddie Davis stays. What it has to offer is known in the trade as either "businessman's bounce" or "society music." This is not to be confused with so-called "potted-palm music," a dubious form of entertainment which puts one in mind of stately hotel lobbies where patrician old ladies sip their tea to the strains of "Waldteufel" as interpreted by a string ensemble. Eddie Davis has never in his tuxedoed life played "Waldteufel," at least of his own free will, but he has, among a great many other bewitching numbers, played such haunting show tunes as Rodgers and Hart used to fashion—"As Though You Were There" and "Baby's Awake Now" and ever so many others—and the glory that was George Gershwin's—"I Got a Crush on You" and "But Not for Me" and even "The You-Don't-Know-the-Half-of-It-Dearie Blues." The little old ladies sipping their tea amid the potted palms and nodding their heads to "Over the Waves" would not appreciate this sophisticated sort of thing, and neither, for that matter, would most of Manhattan. Over at Roseland, in fact, they

wouldn't give you a dime for it. But in his element, which is the fussy rather than the assimilative East Side, Eddie Davis—his violin and his orchestra—is a real hero.

And so, for that matter, is Cy Walter.

This Cy Walter, although a grown man, to be sure, is also a school of thought, and while he is one cocktail pianist, he is all other cocktail pianists as well. You see him or his like coming to life as dusk washes down over the East Side. He seats himself at the baby grand, rubs his hands together, and then proceeds to make music. Sometimes it is good music, sometimes indifferent, but in the case of Cy Walter it is almost always good.

Out in Butte, Montana, he obviously would not mean a thing, and no one would expect him to, really. What is a good deal more significant is that his appeal is limited even in his own town, and that his tinkling piano has yet to be heard by people who patronize the Second Avenue Theater, not far removed from the scene of his operations. The people who fancy him are the people who regard Fifth Avenue as a line of demarcation with abiding and even terrifying implications.

That this is true can be proved by the case of Tommy Lyman.

Lyman is an ageless man who sings a ballad better than anyone else in the world—or so, at any rate, his admirers believe. For many, many years now, he has been working on the East Side, in dimly-lit rooms which sigh with romance. He is an ageless man, this Tommy Lyman, and possibly even a homeless one, because nobody knows where he lives, and when you want to reach him, you phone the Lexington Hotel and leave a message. What's more, he is not, to use the words of one of his ballads, much to look at. But given the East Side room, with its dark corners and its lovers, and he is a very special man indeed.

All over the vast city people have retired for the night, but this is the time when Tommy Lyman goes to work on "Melancholy Baby" or "Montmartre Rose" or "But Beautiful," caressing the lyric and making it an intimate and lovely thing, and a believable thing, too. All over the vast city people are sleeping, but in the dimly-lit East Side room where Lyman is whispering of the sickness of old passions and the tenderness of new ones, there is a crowd, silent, worshipful, believing. These are people who would remain there forever if only he would keep on whispering. These are people who regard him as a man without an equal among all the singers on the face of the earth.

But there came a night when, professionally speaking, he stepped across Fifth Avenue and went to work in a West Side club. It was as if he had turned traitor. He did not do well in that club on the other side of Fifth, and after a while he canceled his engagement. Although there is no record of his ever having said so to anybody who expressed sympathy over this misfortune, he might have observed, "You shoulda caught me on the East Side." . . . THE END

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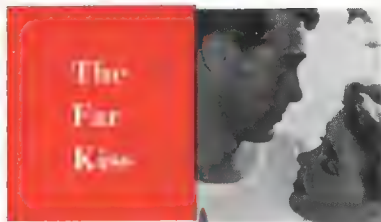
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(Continued from page 44)

Mark jerked in his chair as though Walt had kicked him. For one wild second he felt like knocking the table over and then . . . then what?

He forced himself to look at Carrie, seeking some kind of strength from her.

She was smiling at her cards, which told them all she had a good hand. Simple, forthright Carrie, who couldn't even keep you guessing at cards. Bunny. Would he ever be able to call her that again? A tenderness for her welled up in him, and he thought, if I could only get this other out of my system. If I could look at Ann and feel nothing. . .

This afternoon Carrie had begged him to drive out to Crescent Lake and take a look at the house.

"It's been on the market only a week," she'd said. "Somebody's going to snap it up. We should get our deposit down if we want it, Mark."

He had repeated patiently, firmly, "Crescent Lake is too far out, honey. There's no use looking."

"But we'll never find a place if you won't even look. And, Mark, we can't have a baby till we move. We said we wanted our family when we're young, didn't we?"

He had thought, You're just a baby yourself, Carrie. You're sweet and cute and lots of fun and I love you, but—"There's plenty of time," he had said shortly.

Her eyes grew big and hurt. "What's got into you, Mark?"

"Not a thing," he'd answered, and despite himself, his voice was irritated. Then, because she looked so big-eyed, like a child who was being scolded and didn't know why, he had offered, "I'll help you fix the stuff for the stew. Hadn't we better get it going?"

She loved to have him fiddle around in the kitchen with her. Despite her kid-dishness and gayety, she was a good little cook, and she always looked sweet standing at the stove stirring something, one hand in her apron pocket and her hair fluffed out from the heat.

Walt said now, as they finished another hand, "By golly, Carrie, I'd have sworn you didn't remember that five-spot was high, but you held onto it. Smart girl!"

She laughed. "Well, I wasn't sure, but—"

Ann smiled and sighed, "They're too good for us, Mark."

His hands paused, shuffling the cards. What did she mean? Was she feeling exactly the way he felt, but trying to make him see they couldn't hurt Walt and Carrie?

But what about us? he thought. Aren't you being hurt right now, Ann? Isn't this as hard on you as on me?

He looked at her, forgot the cards,

and said, "How about a drink?" He stood up, questioned no one in particular, "Anyone want to help me?" She'd say yes. She'd stand up and come with him. Ann. Ann. He willed her to come.

But it was Walt who started to get up, saying, "Sure, I'll give you a hand."

Mark felt his shoulders sag. Disappointment as sharp and real as he'd ever felt weakened him. He could have bawled like a kid. "Oh, never mind, Walt. I guess I can manage." Maybe that was rude, but Walt, the kind of guy who never took offense, settled back in his chair and said, "Sure, okay."

And now, walking into the kitchen, Mark felt apologetic to Walt. Not for his rudeness, but for . . . everything. Hell, Walt, he thought. I'm sorry for you and Carrie both.

As though the silent apology freed him of them for a moment, he let Ann fill his mind again while he started to make the drinks. The way her white slender hands shuffled the cards; her slow lovely smile that widened her lips and made him want to have them against his; the line of her throat that rose to the clean triangular cheekbones. Beauty. Symmetry. What else did he see in her? Did he love her?

He stalled the answer to that, and poured soda water into the glasses. A white froth formed, then disappeared.

Do I love her?

He didn't know. This craving for her was . . . could you call it love? If so, it wasn't like what he felt for Carrie.

His love for Carrie was deep and quiet—love for a wife. This other, with its driving and aching, was love for a woman. And being caught between them was a kind of hell he'd never known before.

He lifted the tray of glasses, carried it into the living-room. They drank, talked, played another rubber, and when Walt stifled a yawn, the evening came to an end. Saying good night at the door, Mark thought, I've muffed this chance, too. When will I have another? When?

Before he knew it, he was saying, "Look—I just had an idea. Why don't we have a picnic tomorrow? Go to the beach for the day. Up near Clovis."

"I've never been to Clovis," Ann said. "It sounds—" She hesitated, then seemed to change whatever word she'd meant to use. "It sounds fun."

"Yeah," Walt agreed. "I went through there once. Looks like good fishing." He grinned, full of enthusiasm. "Let's get an early start, huh, gang?"

Carrie said nothing, but Mark hastily agreed to the plan. When Walt and Ann had gone upstairs, Carrie looked at Mark and said slowly, "I thought, maybe, I could get you to drive out to look at the house tomorrow, Mark."

"I told you, Carrie—" But he stopped, not wanting to argue with her now, not wanting even to think about her and the house. She watched him go into the bedroom and said nothing more.

Lying in bed, Mark pictured Clovis. The ocean played in little bays and coves along the coast. A whole day at Clovis. He'd be alone with Ann sometime. He knew it. Tomorrow.

PSYCHOLOGIST'S CASEBOOK

continued from page 45

DR. JOHN R. MARTIN'S ANALYSIS:

In the life of every little girl, from infancy till she is well along in school, there is only one man in the world—her father. Like any normal girl in a happy home, Evelyn was devoted to her father. He was her ideal of manhood.

At the same time, however, she was painfully conscious of the difficulty of making ends meet on a clergyman's salary. Her father's lack of financial success worried Evelyn.

Evelyn chose to marry Harry, because of the early wish that her ideal man be financially successful. She certainly loved Harry, and in her mind he was associated with the things that stand for financial success—a bank, responsibility for money, a regular salary. After marriage she desired immediately the social position she believed to "go with" money. This desire led Evelyn to put on airs. She tried overnight to make Harry the financial success she had always wanted her father to be. Diagnosis No. 2, therefore, is correct in this case.

Evelyn needs help. If she goes on being "Miss High and Mighty," she will antagonize others, and make it harder for Harry to achieve the very financial success that she wants him to enjoy. If she continues to nag Harry, they will both be unhappy, and their marriage will become meaningless.

Through knowing and loving each other as they really are, Evelyn and Harry can make theirs a happy and successful marriage.

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Sunday was rightly named. A Sunday. The hills near Clovis were lush and dark green; below them, the sandy beach was a margin dividing the water and land. Ann and Carrie spread blankets on the sand and used the gallon thermos jug and baskets of food as weights so the wind wouldn't lift the blankets. There was a low steady roar from the ocean, brought landward by the wind.

Walt spied an old weatherbeaten pier and said, "Good spot to fish from. Let's walk down."

Mark, feeling as though he could afford to be genial and generous in this early part of the day, said, "Sure. Looks good."

The four of them headed into the wind and walked toward the pier. Ann's lithe body was slender and curved in green slacks and a pink cashmere sweater. She lifted her face to meet the wind, and it pushed back her black hair the way he wanted to push it back with his hands. She smiled at him once, but her eyes were unreadable.

Carrie wore jeans and a white shirt and walked somewhat behind the others, kicking at the sand now and then with her feet.

Walt called back to her, "Come on, slowpoke! The fish won't wait!"

"I'm in no rush," she answered without interest. She paused, picked up a sea shell and held it to her ear.

Mark knew she wasn't sulking, holding back like that; in fact, she'd been sport enough to sing all the way out from town in the car, but he knew she was thinking of the Crescent Lake house.

They sat on the pier a long time, fishing, and caught nothing. Mark let the others do the talking. All he wanted to do was watch Ann. This was desire, need, want. And before this day was over, he would hold her in his arms. Kiss her. Once. Just that, first of all ... and then ...

They walked slowly back to the car when they knew they'd had enough sun. Carrie and Ann brought out food, and it tasted better than anything they'd had for months. At least, Mark agreed with them that it did. He was careful not to let them notice how little he ate.

Walt adjusted his portable radio; they all smoked in silence, watching the water, and it was natural to become sleepy. Mark lay there, not four feet from Ann, and the sand through the blanket was warm against him. He stared at the sky, thinking, Could I ask her to go for a walk? Can I ask her that in front of Carrie and Walt?

Just then Carrie sat up, got to her knees, and looked out over the water. Without a word or glance at Mark, she rose and headed toward the pier again.

Mark couldn't breathe, watching her walk away, watching her stop now and then to pick up a shell.

He waited a long time—until Walt fell asleep. You could tell he was sleeping by his deep contented breathing.

Now. Now he would know if Ann had been waiting, too. Mark sat up and looked at her, lying on her back, one arm flung over her eyes. At last the arm moved and her eyes met his. Instinct-



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tively, he reached for her hand, but she glanced quickly away, as she always did. Then, slowly, she turned to look at him again. Surely, surely, her eyes were telling him . . .

They rose, her hand still in his, and they walked as though they'd known forever where they were going, into the coolness of the trees that grew on the hill.

They went up, between the trees, with the damp shade all about them. It was dark here, after the glaring sun. He led her up, up, and she followed, both of them silent. She slipped once on the pine needles under their feet and clutched his hand tighter.

When they reached the summit he stopped. While they looked at each other in the shadows, her eyes were wide, expectant, telling him what he wanted to know. This was as deep a thing for her as it was for him. But he had to hear her say it. His hands rose to her shoulders, held them tightly. "Ann . . . tell me, Ann. You've got to tell me you feel this, too."

She whispered on a quick breath, "Yes, Mark. Yes."

The wonder of her words washed over him, and her eyes looked so deep into his now that they hurt him. Then she was in his arms and he crushed her close to him and she pressed her cheek against his. He had known her cheek would be smooth like this.

And then, knowing how it would be, how her cheek would turn and his would turn, knowing even as he breathed of her hair, that scented dark cloud beyond his closed eyes, she moved and their lips met, seeking, giving. His blurred thoughts commanded of Time, *Stop now. Nothing exists but this.* Smooth lips against his, just as he'd wanted them, imagined them.

When the softness of her lips left his, he didn't know if she drew away or he did. The far kiss. Waited for. Wished for. Ached for. Gone now. He looked into her eyes and murmured, "Ann, Ann . . ."

But . . . the murmur died on his lips. . . . Her eyes were not gray or blue or green now. Had the tree-shadows darkened them? They looked guilty, shamed. And her face, so close to his, was shadowed with a half-hurt expression. He fought against what he knew. He knew she was hurt by something she saw in his face. The guilt in her eyes was a reflection of his own eyes. Was this beauty? This guilt in Ann's face and in his own?

His gaze was drawn beyond Ann, between the trees, past the edge of the hilltop, and there he saw sunlight. He looked out over the water. Straight out there on the pier he saw Carrie standing alone, silhouetted against the blue-green water, one hand shading her eyes as she looked out over sky and water.

"Mark . . . ?" Ann whispered.

He made himself look at Ann. Her lips were parted, and her eyes too deep, waiting. Something—her own desire and want that were stronger than she was—was trying to hide the shame.

"Ann." He put his hands on her shoulders and shook her gently in his need to make her understand. "Ann,

listen. It's no good. We both know it. If we go on, you know what it means. We can't do that to ourselves, and we can't do it to Walt and Carrie. We . . . we're not going any farther, Ann."

Her long dark lashes fell, covering her eyes to hide the quick pain that rose in them. At last, without looking up, she said, "No, we aren't going any farther. You . . . you're right, Mark. I know you're right." She glanced around her at the trees, the undergrowth, and shivered. When she looked up at last, there was relief in her eyes and the beginning of gratitude.

Slowly, his hands rose to her cheeks once more, then dropped away from her face, leaving it alone there, cool and white and lovelier, perhaps, than he'd ever seen it. He stepped back, away from her. They managed, somehow, to smile at each other. Tentatively, perhaps, but at least it was a smile.

She turned quickly and ran back the way they had come, ran back toward Walt.

Mark stood still, feeling tired and shaken. But all he had to do was look out there, between the trees, and see Carrie. Bright and clear and good.

He took the nearest path, worked his way into sunlight and sand. On the beach, as he walked, he watched Carrie waiting for him at the end of the pier. And he thought, If we start home right away, we'll still have time to drive by Crescent Lake and look at her house. Our house.

When he reached her, she smiled and said, "Hi."

Gently, he rumbled her wind-blown hair. He could say it now: "Hi, Bunny. What's doing?" . . . THE END

"You're
a Smart
Kid"

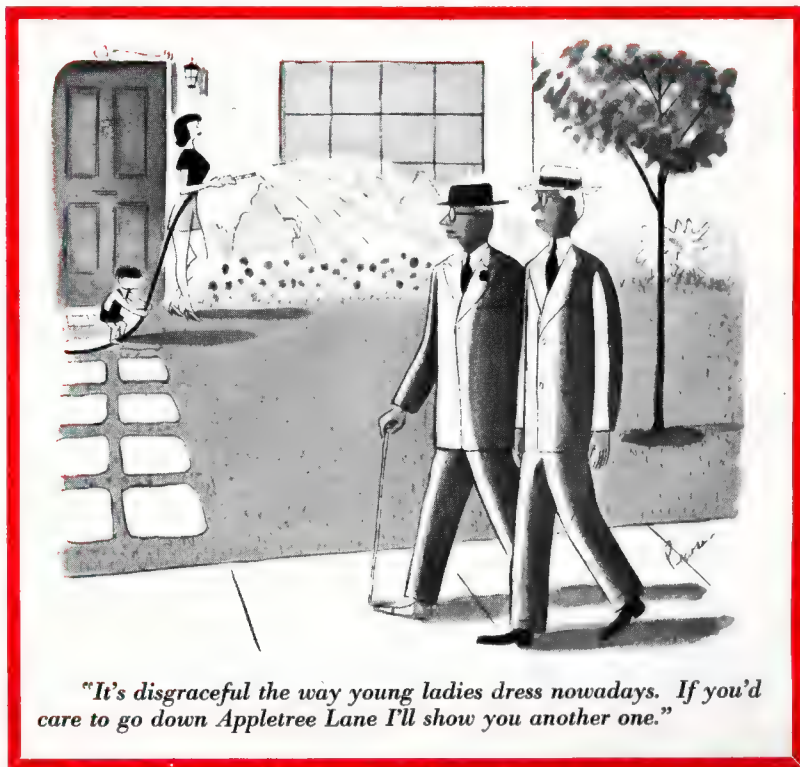


(Continued from page 27)

have been a lot easier on her at that, she said. She said I was a big baby; I was tall even when I was born. It's like I once heard Kevin saying to her, and I knew he was talking about me. "I don't expect him to be everything, but I think one might reasonably demand that he be something—besides tall." He was joking.

It's not so easy for me to talk to Kevin; he's not like Al. Al was the ski instructor I met two years ago during the Christmas vacation. Kevin and Mary were both on the Coast during the holidays, and Joan just stayed at her school. They sent me to this camp in the Adirondacks, and I met Al. He and I hit it off right away. He was twenty-three, of course, and a student at Dartmouth—a sophomore, I believe. He's a big blond guy, very handsome, and he seemed to like to talk to me.

I learned a lot from Al—besides how to ski, I mean. He was going to be a scientist of some kind, and he told me how everything is made up of molecules and atoms and all, even tables and chairs. He talked about the universe, too; you know—how little the earth is in comparison with some of the other planets,



"It's disgraceful the way young ladies dress nowadays. If you'd care to go down Appletree Lane I'll show you another one."

and if maybe there are people on Mars and do they have two heads each. It was very interesting. He even gave me a couple of science books to read, and every evening we'd talk about what I'd read during the day. Once I remember he said, "You're a smart kid, Kev." He called me "Kev," which nobody ever had before, and nobody had ever said the other, either.

Later, I tried to tell Kevin about Al, but before I really got started, Kevin said, "One of those ski bums, I suppose." I didn't try to explain. As I say, Kevin's never been much interested in skiing, or in science, either. That's not in his line, and there's no reason it should be. He's a writer, and I notice the other day a columnist called him the most successful living American author, which is true. Kevin would like me to be a writer, too, but he once told me that anybody who wanted to write had to learn how to read first, and he said as far as he could see I hadn't even learned that. That was two summers ago. "Of course," he said, "you're only twelve, and we can't expect you to be a prodigy, can we?" Kevin didn't mean anything by it. He just talks that way.

But it is funny. You know—with my mother, Mary, being a writer, too. If she has the time, she's coming up to see me next week-end, before she goes out West. She's going to write the movie script of her new play, "With Love," which I guess everybody knows is still running on Broadway. I saw it four times this summer. All I have to do is walk up to the box office. Dave, who's the ticket seller, knows me, and even if the SRO (that's Standing Room Only) sign is up, which it usually is, he always has what he calls a house seat for me. That gives me quite a bang.

Mary is a very witty woman, too. The columnists are always quoting her. She doesn't actually say all the things they say she says. Her publicity man makes some of them up, but people are always laughing at something she's saying. Like with me. She calls me her idiot child sometimes, as a gag, and once she said I was a real natural phenomenon. She said I was both Jack *and* the beanstalk.

But this is supposed to be about my summer vacation.

The whole thing started last spring, when I was at a military academy. Kevin wrote me a letter saying that maybe he was going to send me and Joan out to his father's place in Wyoming. I've never met either my grandfather or my grandmother, but Kevin comes from this ranch in Wyoming. It's funny. I remember one of the book critics once writing that it was odd that what this critic called America's most sophisticated novelist came from a farm in Wyoming. This critic didn't even know the difference between a ranch and a farm.

However, Kevin wrote me this letter. I've got it right here; I save all of his letters, and Mary's and Joan's, too. He wrote that if I passed both Latin and math, I could spend the summer out there on the ranch with his folks and Joan. "I'm not asking much," he wrote. "The head mistress at Joan's school tells me

Are you in the know?



When shaking hands do you think it's smooth to —

- ☐ Remove your gloves ☐ Keep them on ☐ Say "Pardon my glove"

Remove your mitt or apologize for same? "Tain't fittin', kitten! A lady's gloves should 'stay put.'" At least 'til she's seated in the theatre, or at a restaurant table. To stay hand-in-glove with *confidence* on "trying" days—put certain worries out of mind.

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- ☐ "I can do anything"
☐ "I want to get experience"
☐ "Sell" yourself

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Which color compliments a suntan?

- ☐ Orange
☐ Chartreuse
☐ Cerise

To flatter your suntan—thumbs down on all three answers above (fooled you!). Choose *cool* hues; blues, for instance. *White* out-woos them all. And on certain days, it pays to be choosy—about sanitary protection. Kotex comes in 3 *absorbencies* (different sizes, for different days), so you can select what's best for *you*. Try Regular, Junior, Super. Each has a special *safety center*—for your extra protection.



More women choose KOTEX
than all other sanitary napkins*

3 ABSORBENCIES: REGULAR, JUNIOR, SUPER

she'll probably get a straight A average. Now all I'm asking you to do is *pass* two subjects. I hope, my dear Kevin, that you will not consider this an outrageous demand, though judging by your past scholastic record it may well be. If you don't pass, you will stay in New York this summer and make up your failures. Understand?" I did.

Well, I didn't pass either Latin or math. It's peculiar, but when I feel I just have to do something, it never seems to come out right, especially if I have to do it for Kevin. Once when I was a kid I tried to chin myself twelve times on one of those bars they have in Central Park; another kid, who was littler than me, already had. I chinned myself eleven times all right; then Kevin, who was watching me, shouted something, and I lost my grip and fell. I almost broke my leg, the doctor said. Or like the first year I was away at school. It was the school Kevin had gone to when he was a kid, and he was about the best pupil they ever had. The masters were always telling me how bright Kevin was and why couldn't I be that way? I don't know what happened, but I didn't pass a single subject that year. Not one. I like to think I tried too hard, but I know that sounds silly.

Anyway, I got back to New York from that military academy during the first week in June. Joan was already packed, and the day after I got home we drove her out to the airport, Kevin and I. She was pretty nice that morning. She's a good kid, though you'd sometimes never guess it. She kept saying things like she'd just as soon be in the city in the summer, and about how she bet it was pretty exciting in New York when everybody else was away some place. I knew when she was feeling sorry for me.

When we got to that little low building where you wait to go out to the plane, she squeezed my hand and said, "I wish you were coming, too, Kevy." She hardly ever calls me that any more. It was a kid name. Usually now they call me "Junior" or, more often, "Shorty" or, sometimes, "Graceful."

I think she was kind of crying, too—not really crying; just making like she could cry if she had half a chance. Joan never cared much for Western movies or stuff like that. She never went in for horseback riding, the way I did that first summer we had the house up in Connecticut. I got quite a bang out of riding, but the next summer they'd closed the stable; so I have no idea how I'd be now.

Kevin kissed Joan good-by, and I just put out my hand and shook hers, but she leaned over and kissed me on the cheek. I didn't mind much.

Kevin and I stood there until the plane got off the ground. He put his hand on my shoulder. I would like to have stuck around for a while—there's always so much going on at LaGuardia—but Kevin had to get back.

We had quite a little talk in the taxi, the way we do once in a while if Kevin has the time and I haven't been doing something to make him mad. He kept saying how it wouldn't be so bad in New York, after all. He was going to have

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theme was appropriate. In his printshop, my husband embossed the pencil with Michael's name, and printed the cards that tell the vital statistics.

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to spend a couple of months on the Coast. (They're making a movie of his last book.) But after he got back, Kevin said, he'd have lots of time, and we'd have some fun. He kept saying how when he got back we'd find time to go driving in the country after my classes, and maybe go swimming and walking in the woods. And probably, he said, we could go hunting, too. I didn't have the heart to tell him you don't go hunting in the summer.

I remember he said to me, "You do like to hunt, don't you?" And I said, yes, I did. And he put his arm around my shoulder again.

The way it turned out, Kevin left for the Coast a couple of days after Joan, and he stopped off to spend a few days with her on the way. And to see his folks, of course.

Well, to get on with my vacation. The mornings were pretty much the same, except for Saturdays and Sundays.

I mean I got up around eight, after Mattie called me three or four times and then came in and yanked the covers off. After I'd showered, she'd have breakfast on the table. I'm a big eater. As Mattie says, I've got lots of space to fill up. Mary wasn't ever up in time for breakfast.

After breakfast I'd rush off to this school in the city, and I'd be in class until twelve. There were twenty-nine of us, all guys. I was almost the only one who didn't smoke, and they kidded me about it. Wanted to know if I was an athlete or something.

The teacher was a big, red-faced woman with a deep voice. Somebody said she'd once been a woman wrestler, though I believe that was only a gag. She seemed to think her main job was to keep us quiet for three hours, which she mostly did. Nobody wanted to tangle with her. And she'd get mad if you didn't know the answers. Lots of times I did, but as soon as she'd ask me, the answer just seemed to disappear from my head. Then she'd go on to the next guy,

and before he could open his mouth I'd know the answer again. The same way with tests. Lots of times I'd know what I was supposed to know until it came time to write it down. Then it would disappear.

Anyway, we stayed in this school from nine until twelve. And then I'd go home for lunch. A couple of times Mary was there. But usually she was down at her office in Rockefeller Center; she writes there. Mattie was always home, of course, but Mattie never says much except have I had enough to eat and did I wash my hands before coming to the table. Stuff like that.

In the afternoons, I went swimming at the Suffolk Hotel. They've got a pool up there on the roof, and it's only a few blocks from the apartment. It was fun, though different from the Sound. I mean I didn't get to know anybody like Freddie and Mac. They live in Westport all year round, and I guess I know them better than any guys ever, even in school. We'd go on wienie roasts and camp out some nights. And we went fishing once or twice, too. Freddie and Mac were both Boy Scouts, and I once thought I'd like to be a Boy Scout myself. You learn all kinds of things that way, but Kevin made some cracks about the Boy Scouts. Kid stuff, he said.

Anyway, this pool wasn't very much like the Sound. Even the lifeguard was an old guy of about thirty-five or so.

I went to the movies a lot, too. Especially on week-ends; one Saturday I saw three in a row, including one double feature. But you can only see so many movies. Lots of days I didn't do anything in the afternoon except maybe sleep or read or something. I read lots of Jack London's books; I guess I read everything Jack London ever wrote. I like his stuff, but I don't know if he's any good or not. If Kevin had been around, I would have asked him. I didn't want to ask Mary.

Mary was busy; she's working on another play, and then Paul was in from the Coast. Paul has known Mary and, of course, Kevin, for years—almost ever since I can remember. He's Paul Jordan, the actor, and most girls think he's handsome, which he is, though quite old. Paul and Mary took me to "South Pacific" and "Death of a Salesman"—all that stuff. And before the theater we'd have dinner at Sardi's or "21"—some place like that. They tried to include me in the conversation, but it was tough.

I could tell I was cramping their style. That's why I'd go home right after the theater. On the way, I'd buy the tabloids and read all the headlines before going to bed. Plus the columns. I always read Winchell and Walker and Sullivan and the sports pages. If it hadn't been for my buying the papers, it might never have happened. My picture on the second page of one and on page 3 of another. I want to tell exactly the way it was, because it's certainly the most important thing that happened all summer. As you can see, most of the summer, while very interesting, was not exactly front-page news.

I'd gone to the movies. I forget which one. On the way home, I stopped

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off at Nedick's and had a couple of hot dogs and three orange drinks. Then I bought the papers and went home by subway and had finished one by the time I got to the apartment. It was Mattie's night off, so nobody was home. I had a glass of ginger ale and read the next paper. I always start at the back with the sports pages and read forward.

I almost didn't read the columns at all. I was getting tired, and it was after midnight. I don't know how much after, but quite a bit. I forgot to look at a clock. This item was about halfway down a column, and all it said was (I can quote it exactly, though I've lost the clipping itself)—all it said was, "What well-known writing couple have gone pfft? He's on the Coast, and she's on the Main Stem. Understand there'll be quite a legal battle over custody of the daughter." That's all it said, and that was enough.

I just sat there for a while—maybe five minutes, maybe longer, maybe not that long. All I can remember is I felt kind of numb, like the time at the military academy when I got hit on the head with a baseball and passed out for a couple of minutes. When I came to, I felt the same way—just kind of numb.

I had left the icebox door open while I sat at the kitchen table reading. I closed it. I remember that. Then I went to my bedroom, and I took down one of my suitcases, the small one, and I put a couple of shirts in it and an extra pair of pants and three pairs of shorts, I think it was three, four or five pairs of socks, and two Jack London books. I forgot my toothbrush and toothpaste. I wasn't really thinking, I guess.

Then I looked in my wallet, though I knew how much was there. I had thirty-two dollars and sixty-five cents—most of my allowance for the last five weeks. I left the key to the apartment on the hall table, and I thought some of leaving a note for Mary, but decided against it.

The night man on the elevator looked at me kind of funny. He's a nice old duck, old enough to be my grandfather, I guess, and we've talked quite a bit at one time or another. I mean, this summer when I was getting home and wasn't tired, he'd stop the elevator some place between floors, and we'd shoot the breeze. He was born on a farm up in French Canada, and he had lots of stories about all the things that happened up there when he was a kid. I didn't believe a lot of them, but he was fun. Besides, I could tell he was kind of lonely.

That night when we started down, he kept looking over his shoulder at me, and I remember he said, "Going away on a trip?" I said I was. All by myself? he wanted to know. I said yes. All by myself. He wasn't going to get anything out of me.

I walked around for a while, no place in particular. I walked up Park for a few blocks, then back; my suitcase wasn't heavy. It must have been late by then—after two, I suppose; I didn't really care. Finally, I decided to go to a hotel. Not the Plaza or the Ritz or the Pierre; all of Kevin's and Mary's friends hang around places like that.

There are a lot of little hotels

around, on the side streets, mostly west of Fifth Avenue. I walked into one. The clerk didn't say a word. I was afraid he might. That night was the first time I've ever been glad I was so tall. I guess I look a couple of years older than I am.

The clerk pushed the register at me, and I wrote a name in it—John Maxwell. I wrote it easily, as if I'd been writing John Maxwell in hotel registers all my life. I used to know a John Maxwell at the school in Vermont; he was my roommate. He was a nice kid, too—quiet but nice. He only stayed one semester, though. I don't think his old man had much money. At that school that semester, he and I and a couple of other guys in the class were the only ones whose parents weren't divorced. You run into that kind of thing once in a while.

After I'd signed, the clerk gave me a key. He didn't bother to show me the room, and there wasn't any bellboy. It was a funny kind of hotel. The room was on the top floor, so I had to walk up three flights of stairs, and there wasn't any bath in the room, but otherwise it wasn't so bad. There was a washbowl in the corner, and there was a window and a bed and a bureau and a chair. Everything was fairly clean, too.

I put my Jack London books on top of the bureau, and my shirts and other stuff inside. Then I undressed and hung my suit on the back of the chair. I forgot to say there wasn't any closet in the room—just some hangers on a clothes rack in one corner. I'd forgotten my pajamas, but it didn't matter. I don't like pajamas much, anyway. I climbed into bed, and when I turned off the light I noticed it was nearly light outside. I must have walked longer than I thought.

If I were making this up, I'd say I tossed and turned and couldn't sleep, but that wouldn't be true. I went to sleep right away. I guess I was tired.

You may wonder what I was thinking about when I was doing all that walking. I'm not sure I remember exactly. I didn't cry. Some guys might have, but I didn't. I wondered a little if I could think of anything that had happened between Kevin and Mary; you know—to give kind of a hint that they were calling it off. But there wasn't anything. Some of the kids I knew at the military academy were always telling how their folks fought a lot. But Kevin and Mary didn't. They always seemed to have quite a bit of fun together. Also, I wondered about how if they were going to fight about who was going to have Joan, did that mean whichever one of them lost would have to take me? That was the only logical way to figure it. Well, I thought, they needn't bother. They didn't have to worry about me. I could take care of myself.

I didn't know what I was going to do. I knew my money wouldn't last long. But I thought maybe I could get a job some place. Or I might be able to join the Navy, although I thought you had to have your folks' permission to do that. I could say I was nineteen or so, but they might not believe me. Or I

might go to the north woods where Jack London writes about and maybe become a forest ranger. I know quite a bit about forest rangers because I've read lots about them. I've always thought I'd like to be one when I get a little older. They live pretty much alone and don't have to see people; sometimes from one year to the next they don't have to see anybody at all. I also wondered if Mary would marry Paul; I supposed so, but I hoped not. I never really liked Paul much.

I slept quite well that morning. And it was afternoon when I woke up. The sun was streaming in the window, and it was hot in the room.

The hotel wasn't very far from Broadway, and I went over there for breakfast. It's funny how it looks in the daytime—not very clean, and a different kind of people, too. I knew I wouldn't see anybody I knew on Broadway in the daytime. It wasn't a matinee day.

After breakfast I went to a triple feature—with short subjects; lots of short subjects. I knew I ought to be thinking about looking for a job, but I decided to wait until the next day. I still felt more or less numb.

It was dark when I got out of the movie, and I walked up to Central Park and clear inside. Central Park is quite a place, you know. I mean, if you just drive through you may not realize how big it is. In some places it's almost like being out in the country, and you don't see anybody at all—not even the cars driving by. You can just be there all by yourself.

I laid down on the grass. There were a lot of stars that night. I kept thinking how it would be nice to have somebody to talk to about it—not just anybody, but somebody special—and I couldn't think of anybody. Al would have been about the only one. But he lives up in Vermont now; he works in some laboratory up there, and he probably wouldn't even remember me any more. After that Christmas vacation he went back to Dartmouth, and we wrote for a while, but you know how those things are.

Pretty soon, I fell asleep, and when I woke up I looked at the wrist watch Kevin bought me for my birthday last year. It not only tells the hour and minute and second, but also the day and the month and the year and the barometric pressure. It's a very expensive watch.

It was almost midnight. So I went to the hotel and went to bed and fell asleep again. I fell asleep almost immediately. I thought a little about Joan and wondered if she was having a good time. And I thought about Kevin and wondered if Mary had wired him about my running away. And I wondered if he'd get Joan.

It was quite early when I woke up the next morning—around seven or so—and I felt hungry. I hadn't had anything to eat since those eggs the day before. Also I had a lot to do. I had to find out about getting in the Navy—or else a job; one of the two. I dressed quickly and put on a clean shirt, though I didn't bathe. I didn't feel dirty.

When I put the key on the desk, the

clerk (it was the same clerk) looked at me kind of funny; then he looked down at the copy of the paper he was reading, looked up again, and examined my face and smiled. He had very bad teeth. He said, "Of course you are," and he called me by name.

I said, "My name's John Maxwell," though I don't think I'm much of an actor.

"Oh, yeah," he said, and he smiled at me again, wider and showing how few teeth he really had. "You wait here," he said, and he came out from behind the desk and went into the phone booth and dialed a number leaving the door of the booth open. I thought of running, but didn't see much point in it. So I waited and turned around the copy of the paper he'd been reading. There was my picture, right on the second page; it wasn't a very good picture, either. It had been taken the summer before, and I was in bathing trunks. I remember Mary said at the time that I looked like a wilted string bean. But you could tell it was me, all right. And there was a headline over the picture saying that kidnaping was feared. Below it said how old I am and what I was wearing, and said the police were looking for me. There was quite a long story, mostly about who Kevin and Mary are and that Kevin was going to fly East that day and that Mary had cried when she talked to the newspaper men. They quoted the elevator man, too. "He's a funny kid," they quoted the elevator man as saying.

I heard the clerk say something about oh, there wasn't a reward, huh, and he was angry. Then he gave the address of the hotel and banged up the receiver. When he came out of the phone booth, he glared at me and said, "Far as I'm concerned you might just as well take off now, but you can wait if you want to. The police'll be here in a minute." I waited, and I felt sort of bad, because it looked as if Kevin and Mary had worried about me, and maybe Joan, too. Besides, it was all in the papers, which made it kind of a scandal. They wouldn't like that.

Anyway, the police came—not real policemen; two men in regular clothes—and took me home. Mary was waiting at the door when the policemen and I got off the elevator. She was crying, but she looked very pretty, anyway, and not old enough to be my mother.

After the police left, a lot of reporters called, but Mary wouldn't talk to them. She just sat in the living-room with me, holding my hand, crying quite a bit and asking me why I'd done it. And she kept saying, "It's my fault," over and over again, not making any sense. I said it wasn't; I said I'd just wanted to go away for a while.

She wanted me to tell her things, too. You know—all kinds of things: who my friends were, did I have any girls, silly stuff like that; and she wanted to know what books I was reading. I told her I was reading Robert Louis Stevenson because I know he's supposed to be good, and, as I say, I'm not sure about Jack London.



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Kevin got home that night. He looked funny; he looked tired and really rather old. I'd never thought of his being old before. I remember when he came in the dining-room, where Mary and I were having dinner, he just stood there at the door a while—quite a long time, I thought—looking first at me and then at Mary, and seeming to try to look at both of us at the same time. Then he came over and kissed me, and he kissed Mary, too, first on the forehead and then on the mouth. She took his hand and squeezed it.

After dinner, he and Mary went in that little room off the library; Kevin calls it his study. I sat in the big chair by the window reading "Call of the Wild" again, and I could hear their voices, but not what they said. They seemed to be angry at first—loud, I mean—and then they quieted down. They must have been there about an hour, maybe more, maybe less, and then they came out, and Kevin gave Mary a sleeping pill. He always has some in his pocket. She kissed me and then went to bed. After that Kevin and I had a pretty long talk. He did most of it, though. He always does.

I couldn't lie to Kevin. I never can. I told him about the item I'd read in a column, and he smiled, though not because he thought it was funny, I think. He said you couldn't believe all you read in the papers.

We talked about a lot of other things, too. That was when he mentioned this school. He said this is a very special school. He said everybody up here makes what he called a real effort to understand boys like me. I didn't know what he meant, but I didn't ask. He said I would like this school very much, even if it is rather strict, and I am sure that I will.

Joan got home a couple of days after that, and the last ten days of my vacation were really swell. The four of us went a lot of places together, and we spent a whole week at that hotel way out on the tip of Long Island. We went swimming and played tennis. I won twice, and we rented a motor boat, and one afternoon we even went on a picnic. Even Mary said it was nice—a trifle rural, she said, but nice.

We seemed to be laughing all the time, and sometimes what we laughed at probably wasn't very funny, but we laughed anyway. Except for one afternoon. Mary was going to take a nap, and Kevin had some letters he wanted to write; Joan and I decided to go swimming. She had her suit on underneath, but I didn't and went up to my room to change.

My room was right next to Kevin and Mary's, and I could hear what they said. I could tell Mary was just about to cry, and I heard her say, "Sure, we both tried. We're two great big wonderful people. We tried." And then I heard Kevin's voice. He was talking low and sounded funny. "We started late," he said, "by several years."

After that, they weren't saying anything for a minute, except Mary really was crying, and finally, after what seemed to be a long time, she said, "We could try again, if we had to, couldn't we?" She said that last part again: "Couldn't we?"

For him?" I heard Kevin kind of sigh, and he said, "Yes, darling. Yes, Mary," he said, and he started to say something else, but by that time I had my bathing trunks on, and I tiptoed out.

I thought about it all afternoon, and I thought of telling Joan, but didn't. I didn't say anything, and by dinnertime I was glad I hadn't, because Kevin and Mary were okay that night, and you couldn't even tell Mary had been crying. I looked. After dinner, we went into the little town and saw a pretty funny movie, and afterward we all had sundaes in the drugstore there.

Two days later, I had to leave for up here, and I was sorry. I really was. Except that Kevin had told me what a special school this is, I wouldn't want to have come at all.

We drove back to New York, and when we got to the apartment, Mattie already had my stuff packed, and we had lunch, and they all three took me to the train. I had a roomette; I've never had one before. Mary and Joan left first. And before they left, Mary kept holding on to my hand, not saying much, and Joan said, "Don't worry, Kevy. Don't

worry about anything, darling." It was rather embarrassing to have her call me "darling."

Kevin stayed behind a little while, until the train had really started. He said if I got any more silly notions I was to let him know right away. Immediately, he said; *tout suite*, which is French. And he said no matter what, I was to remember that they all love me, all three of them. Then he kissed me, too, and ran. He almost didn't make it.

Well, that's about all, I guess. As I say, I had a very interesting summer vacation, and if Mary has the time she is coming up here before she goes out to the Coast next week-end. Joan has promised to write twice a week, and I will, too. Kevin said he'd write a lot. He plans to spend part of the winter in Reno and in Las Vegas. He told me all about that; he wants part of his next novel to take place in Nevada.

When I read in a Hollywood column that he was planning to get a divorce out there, I just smiled.

Since what Kevin told me, I don't pay any attention to what the columnists say. Besides, after what happened this summer, I know I can count on Mary.

... THE END

Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur



(Continued from page 37)

would appear at the synagogue armed with a leather strap wound around his wrist. As each penitent Jew prostrated himself at the entrance of the synagogue and confessed his sins, he was struck lightly across the back thirty-nine times—the number of lashes inflicted on criminals in the days of the Israelites.

The Jewish religion prescribes a full meal to be eaten before dusk on Yom Kippur Eve, in preparation for the com-

ing fast. An ancient custom among the Jews, fasting was a practical measure of human survival in the days of old when droughts, locust plagues and wars ravaged the people's crops and food stores. But these spontaneous fasts, announced by the sounding of the shofar, also had religious overtones. For on these days the people, dressed in sackcloth and covered with ashes, would form a wailing procession to the sanctuary, where they would pray to God for help in the trials that beset the nation.

Today, in America and elsewhere, the fast of Yom Kippur is penitential, and a demonstration that man's vital need, above food and drink, is to perfect his sense of justice and mercy, of compassion and goodness, and to achieve harmony with the Eternal God. In the words of modern Judaism: "Fasting is the discipline of the body which leads to a humbling and affliction of the soul."

As the sun drops behind the horizon on Yom Kippur Eve a large candle is lit in every Jewish home as a memorial to departed members of the family. It burns during the twenty-four hours of the fast. The synagogue, too, is brilliantly illuminated by tapers. As the evening service begins the congregation hears the stirring Kol Nidre—"all vows"—chant, which is the prayer calling for release from unfulfilled vows made to God during the past year. It is the haunting sentiment of the Kol Nidre melody—by turns an agonized lament and a lyrical tone poem—that evokes in the congregation a sense of nearness to God. The words of the prayer were written in the Ninth Century, but it was not until five hundred years later that the music, composed by an unknown German Jew, was added.

The Kol Nidre does not beg forgiveness for wrongs committed against another person. No Jew, says the Hebrew

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tradition, may expect deliverance until he has made amends to individuals whom he has wronged during the year; all debts, moral and financial, must be liquidated. Neither will God listen to the prayers of those who in their hearts plan evil deeds for the future.

In the pre-Christian days of the Temple in Jerusalem, it was the High Priest alone who prayed for forgiveness of the sins of the people. The High Priest was not only the religious head of the Jewish nation, but also the political ruler of all Palestine. Before the destruction of the Temple by the invading Roman legions, Yom Kippur was the only day of the year on which the High Priest entered the Holy of Holies. This was a small, sanctified room in the top-most tower of the Temple. Here, alone and in darkness, the High Priest confessed his own sins, and prayed for a good year for the people of Israel.

After the Romans had scattered the Jews, there was no Temple and no High Priest to perform the symbolic Yom Kippur ceremonies. But the Jews, homeless and persecuted, continued to observe the day wherever they happened to be. Without the High Priest to act as intermediary, they addressed themselves directly to the Almighty through prayers and confessions.

Today, on Yom Kippur morn, the ritual of the ancient Temple service is related by the rabbi and the cantor. And when it is told how the Jews threw themselves to the ground in the court of the Temple, all in the synagogues prostrate themselves just as their ancestors did when they heard the High Priest call out the Name of God from within the Holy of Holies.

Late in the afternoon the flames of the burned-down Yom Kippur candles begin to sputter in the synagogue. As daylight fades the congregation rises, exhausted by the fast and the arduous hours of worship. And at the moment of the sun's setting a single blast of the shofar brings Yom Kippur to an end.

For orthodox Jews the breaking of the fast is not a festive occasion. There is, of course, an undercurrent of joy that their souls have been cleansed, but the solemnity of the High Holy Days lingers on. In the heart of every faithful Jew is the desire to carry the world, during the coming year, a long step nearer to the true brotherhood of man. Thus it is a passage from the Book of Isaiah that echoes in his mind as the New Year begins:

"Is not this the fast that I have chosen?
To loose the fetters of wickedness,
To undo the band of the yoke,
And to let the oppressed go free. . .
Is it not to deal thy bread to the hungry
And that thou bring the homeless to thy house?
When thou seest the naked, that thou cover him,
And that thou hide not thyself from thy fellow man,
Then shall thy light break forth as the morning . . .
And thy righteousness shall go before thee."

—SELWYN JAMES



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BOOKS

—HARRY HANSEN



VINA DELMAR

Many authors and many books have caught the public's fancy since that day when "Bad Girl" flashed like a brilliant meteor across the literary sky. But they haven't dimmed the memory of that love-story and its twenty-three-year-old author, Vina Delmar. "Who is she?" asked enraptured readers. "Just a kid who never got as far as high school," was the startling reply.

The other day I picked up her latest novel, "About Mrs. Leslie." It proves that Vina Delmar has lost none of her friendliness for young people who get started in life the hard way.

Mrs. Leslie, the principal character of Vina Delmar's book, had had some good luck, some bad. Now she took roomers in Beverly Hills. She had made an easy alliance in her youth, and it had rubbed off some of the bloom. Her present outlook was practical. She observed the ups and downs of her roomers, but tried not to have them lean on her.

Confronted with present-day examples of how young people make the best of things, Mrs. Leslie recalled her own bright hours amid the drab ones. Vina Delmar does not excuse anything, or try to dress it up; she reports all experiences frankly, with human sympathy that makes all these people seem like your own next-door neighbors.

I wondered how Vina Delmar could write so unpretentiously—until I heard her simple life-story. "My parents were in show business," she said. "I was educated in a public school. I did not graduate. I have been on the stage but was not a good actress. I tried the other side of the footlights and was a success as an usher. I have been a typist in one or two offices."

Paramount has bought the novel for filming. "A worldly woman," the studio calls Mrs. Leslie. Well, perhaps, if "worldly" means making the best of things.

(Harcourt Brace, \$2.75)

One Boy— One World



(Continued from page 32)

West Virginia newspapermen soon found out where he came from — a section in the south of Wyoming County known as Skin Fork Hollow — and their cars were soon screeching around the curves of mountain roads.

The family, they discovered, lived in a four-room coal-company house several miles up the hollow from the coal camp of Wyoming in a bend of the Guyandot River. A lad who lived next door had heard the news over the radio and had rushed over while the Shadricks were having breakfast. Ken's mother left the table in tears. His dad, Theodore Shadrick, had gone down to Pineville's radio station, WWYO, to check the report which came in over the news ticker. The serial number of the dead boy was Kenny's number. Still, it wasn't official; wouldn't be until they got a telegram from the Government. Dad Shadrick, a veteran of World War I, knew how rumors travel during war times. He went home and counseled his wife, Lucille, to bear up until the news was confirmed.

The reporters wanted to know what sort of boy Kenny was. "He never saw a bad day in his life," the mother told them. "Never bothered nobody anytime. He never stayed out after dark. He just liked to ride his bicycle and read. Used to read every night. He didn't care much for crowds; guess he had only one or two close friends. He wasn't much of a one for girls."

"All that boy liked was to sit hunched up here with a book and a piece of cold bread," his dad added. "Sometimes we had to shoo him off to bed. Didn't take with women much. Never caused us a mite of worry. He was the best there was."

Kenny died Wednesday morning. On Friday afternoon, at REDBOOK's request, I was in an airliner heading southwest from New York. Through tattered holes in a cloudbank I could look down 8,000 feet to the sharp ridges and knobs of the Appalachian Plateau, drained by little forks and branches which find their way in time to the Ohio River.

The plane dropped below clouds and the Southern highlands came into view — green billows, horizon-wide, some slopes golden with grain, cornfields steeper than the house roofs of highland farmers; and here and there the gray splash of "spoil" from a mine entry on a mountainside.

In Charleston I hunted up Ed Brannon, assistant city editor of the *Gazette*; with him and Jim Hill, who had interviewed the family, I began putting together the facts of Ken Shadrick's life.

The father, Theodore Shadrick, was born fifty-seven years ago in Dallas, Texas, of Tennessee stock. His wife was

born in Tracy City, Tennessee. They had nine children now that Kenny was gone; the oldest was a daughter, Opal. Then came Roy, twenty-five, and another brother, Estel, twenty-two. Kenneth would have been nineteen on August 4th. He was born in Asco on Davy Branch. Brown's Creek region of McDowell County, a few miles south of where the family lives now. From the time his folks moved to Skin Fork Hollow at the opening of a new coal camp, Kenny had never been outside of Wyoming County — until he enlisted. He had gone to grade school on Aldridge Fork and had entered high school in Pineville, the county seat. But in school he had grown restless in spite of good marks. Possibly it was the result of his brothers' reporting on what lay out beyond.

Roy Shadrick, the oldest brother, is a Navy veteran with six battle stars. He saw action in both hemispheres as a fire controlman on the heavy cruiser *Augusta*. Estel, at sixteen, stretched his age and joined the Army. When Roy heard about it he figured the boy was too young and wrote to his commanding officer. Estel came home, waited until he was old enough, and signed on again, serving two years with the Army of Occupation in Bremerhaven, Germany. Their dad put in six years, from 1913 to 1919, and was with the 5th Division Ammunition Train in France.

Kenny's favorite reading material was Western stories and science-fiction. Slowly the picture began to fill in. Mountain men are always moving, and Kenny on his treasured bicycle, exploring the valleys beyond Turkey Ridge, was obeying an ancestral urge. He would set out after breakfast and return in time for supper, and evenings he would travel in fantasy — back along time to the days when the frontier was pushing toward the sunset, and forward into the future when space-ships would push it as far as man can dream.

There was a conflict in Ken Shadrick's life, one which his forebears knew only too well — love of home and kin against the tug of places never seen. And in the end the wandering urge won. In November, two years ago, Ken and the next-door neighbor, Clarence Gene Brown, announced they were going to join the Army. Ken's mother "signed" for him — he was seventeen.

On November 10, the two boys left for Fort Knox, Kentucky, and basic training. Ken was home for Christmas; the next day, he kissed his mother good-by and set off down the hollow on his way back to his outfit. Within a month the two boys from Skin Fork Hollow, Ken and Clarence, were on the sea bound for Japan.

Ken's letters were enthusiastic at first; then the routine of life with the occupation forces began to grow wearisome. In his last letter home, written June 24th of this year, Kenny told his mother that he was homesick: "Mom, this place is getting me down."

Excitement and plenty of it, was on the way. Alerted at Camp Mowery at Kyushu, Shadrick's outfit boarded ship as part of the force being thrown into South Korea by General MacArthur.

"Fluid front" is a polite name for chaos — roads jammed with refugees,

bridges blown up which should be left as lines of retreat, bridges standing which should be blown up; enemy planes hedging to strafe soldiers and civilians; old folks and infants crying by the way-side for someone to take them along; rain over everything, and to the private soldier the ever-present question nagging at the back of his mind: "Where the hell is the enemy?"

Kenny Shadrick and his companions ran into a fluid front.

When Kenny let go with the bazooka at a North Korean tank, he had never before fired at any living target larger than a rabbit. And it is only natural, once you have shot at something, to take a look; to see if you have hit it. But in a war, targets shoot back. Ken Shadrick, ducking up to see, tumbled back with a machine-gun bullet through his chest. Another had shattered his right arm. That was the one he felt, for he moaned, "Oh, my arm!" and then he died.

In the early morning light, with mist still whitening the hollows, I headed south out of Charleston with Frank Wilkin, *Gazette* photographer, who has a vast knowledge of the mountain roads and a gentle way of approaching his fellow man. Skin Fork was only 50 miles away in a straight line, but by mountain road it was more than 100.

Two-fifths of West Virginia has coal under its surface. Coal tips swing into view around every other curve, steel tracks plunging down the hillside, entries gaping black into the heart of the earth, and slate piles filling little gorges level with the roads. The hunger for coal in the great steel towns and industrial centers drew thousands of the Southern highlanders underground, cutting away at the heart of the hills, first with picks, later with machines. The mountain men now burrowed beneath peaks where their forefathers had hunted above ground.

Turning at last off the surfaced road, we began a winding passage down the hollow through which Skin Fork chatters and murmurs on its way to the wider water. At one point a jutting wedge of rock overhangs the road and legend has it that in times long gone the Indians who hunted there spread skins on the rock to sun-dry.

The hollow narrowed. Finally Frank Wilkin braked the car at the edge of a steep bank. Across the ravine, through the second-growth timber, I could make out a little house of the "box" pattern—made without studs, the planks nailed to a frame, their cracks covered with laths tacked on, and the whole treated with creosote against the weather. Frank said, "This is it. There's a road in, but it's too tough. We'd better go down the bank."

Steps had been worn from one sharp rock-point to another by the feet of the Shadrick children. At the bottom a bridge of two logs crossed the fork water and a path led up the far bank.

As I came near to the clearing I heard a woman's voice raised in grief: a sound which is the same in any country and in any age. (*"In Rama was there a voice heard, lamentation, and weeping, and great mourning, Rachel weeping for her children, and would not be comforted, because they are not."*)

MR AND MRS THEODORE SHADRICK
WYOMING WEST VIRGINIA
FROM AGPO DASH CO THE SECRETARY
OF THE ARMY HAS ASKED ME TO EXPRESS HIS DEEP REGRET THAT YOUR SON KENNETH SHADRICK WAS KILLED IN ACTION IN KOREA 5 JULY 1950 CONFIRMING LETTER FOLLOWS
EDWARD F WITSELL
THE ADJUTANT GENERAL
OF THE ARMY

A taxi driver had brought the telegram up from Pineville a few minutes before.

Making his way past the children who were playing on the porch steps, a slender, sandy-haired, gray-eyed man came over to us. He was Ken's brother Roy. In the absence of the father, who had gone into town to do the week's trading, Roy was the head of the family.

"Telegram just got here," he explained. "I guess Mom was bearing up until it was certain." After a pause he added, "She'll most likely feel better when my dad gets back. Mothers are that way. The way I feel is—it's got to be, then it's got to be."

We went back to the car and turned up the road to the home of Jerry Stewart, the "nearest to a girl friend Kenny ever had." Geraldine Stewart, with her mother and older sister, were dressed for town and about to leave as we passed under the rose-arbor framing their gate.

"Kenny was a mighty quiet boy," Mrs. Stewart said. "He'd come up and play ball with my boys and sometimes he'd sit around talking to Jerry. She only heard from him once after he left. He never came around much—most always he was off on his bicycle somewhere; never liked to stay still for long."

LeRoy Bottomlee, whose folks live several miles farther up the road, was out binding sheaves of oats with his dad. "I was about as close a friend as Kenny Shadrick ever had, I guess. I went hunting with him a few times. But Kenny was a hard boy to get to know real well."

"I guess if this keeps up over there," LeRoy's father said, "all the boys will be in it."

This general opinion in the hollow was that if Korea meant war, then it meant war. The folks hoped we could stop the Red armies short of that. If not, they said, then let's fight 'em to a finish.

When we got back to the Shadrick place the father had returned. He was sitting on the porch and came down to greet us, speaking softly so as not to disturb his wife, who was inside. Theodore Shadrick, at fifty-seven, has hair with no gray in it. His face is seamed with fine lines. He has the calm of a man who has seen so much death and disaster that nothing can shake him. For thirty-seven years he has been mining coal, almost all of it "low vein"—seams three feet high. A bad knee, acquired from crawling along the low passages, now has him working on the belt conveyors, but he can do anything in a coal mine that needs doing.

When his wife protested, "I don't think they should have sent eighteen- and nineteen-year-old boys in there to fight," he put his hand gently on her shoulder. "Lucy, the reason they do that is because those young fellows can get around better than the older ones." His answer to any

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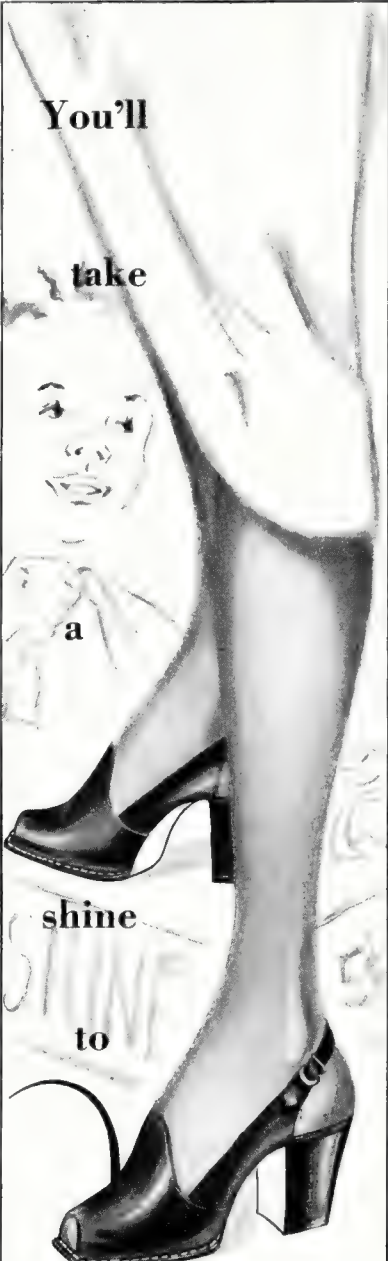
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tragedy which has already happened is, "If it's got to be, it's got to be."

Of Kenny, he said, "He was a good student, all right. He could read something once and remember it weeks later. The principal begged him not to quit school to go to the Army, but he wouldn't listen."

"He just took a notion to go," Roy Shadrack said. "He wanted to see the world, too. Like me."

In the front yard of many a mountain home is a large log which serves as an auxiliary porch and a block for splitting kindling. Roy and I moved off from the house to the sitting-log, where our talk wouldn't bother his mother.

Roy said, "Kenny never played much with other children when he was little. Just kept by himself. None of us ever fought one another. But if somebody else was to pick on one of us, why, all three would pile onto him. Kenny had a shotgun once but he swapped it for something. Same with the goats. He had a couple of goats and he swapped them. But mostly he swapped books. That was what he liked most, books. And his bicycle. If you didn't know him real well you couldn't get a word out of him. But he could talk a blue streak when he had a mind to. That is, to me he could. But you never could tell what he was thinking; you never could."

I had learned several interesting things about Kenny's brother Roy from other folks in the county. One was that he was a candidate for the House of Delegates, the State legislature. Another was that the year before last he had won more

than twenty turkeys and \$200 in cash at "turkey shoots," using a single-barreled 16-gauge shotgun. The range is 120 feet, the target a six-inch square of paper on which the contestant has placed a cross mark. Whoever places his shot closest to his cross mark wins. Roy is one of the best shots in the county.

"There's a lot of difference, shooting at a target or at a squirrel, than shooting in a war," Roy observed. "If Kenny had been up close to the front a couple of times he would never have raised his head up the way he did. Kenny and those boys with him were green troops. I guess they just sent over the best they had. But a place like the one he was in—you need fellows with experience. If this thing don't turn into a full-size war, then they ought to have a regular force of men who know how to fight, like a world police force. That's what I think and I've heard others around here say the same."

I guess they just sent over the best they had . . . They ought to have a regular force of men who know how to fight, like a world police force. . .

The smaller children played on, unconcerned, too young to realize what had happened. Wanda, who is nine, was in the porch swing, and seven-year-old Peggy tried to duck behind it and got bumped. Eileen who is sixteen, comforted her and made her hush up, so as not to bother Mom.

A dog named "Blue" had been chained up by the shed to keep him out from underfoot. He sensed that something

was wrong among his folks and whined for somebody to let him loose or play with him. Jack, eleven, went over to him and told him to hush up if he wanted to get scratched.

Little Roland, the five-year-old, was playing on the log bridge. He fell off and was fished out by Junior Shadrack, his thirteen-year-old brother, who set him in the sun to dry. Eileen took him in the house and changed his wet overalls for a pair of dry bathing trunks.

I asked Roy where Kenny would be buried, and he described a tiny graveyard on the mountainside; we had passed it on the way in. "There's very few buried there," Roy added. "The last one was a miner, died of silicosis. But that's where Kenny will be buried — when they ship him home."

According to Roy, Kenny's health was rugged and he had never had any accidents. "Only time I recall him getting hurt was when he got hit by a mattock in the cheek. He and his brother, Estel, were digging fishworms. He always had a little scar from it. But that was the only time he was hurt. He was five feet ten and weighed about a hundred and thirty when he joined up. But he was still growing. He would have been the biggest of any of us, if he'd lived. Well. . . ." He stood up, his eyes somber, and gazed down the bank. "It's got to be."

Dad Shadrack came out, bringing a portable radio to listen to the news broadcast. He brought it to the sitting-log, so as not to disturb the quiet of the house.

The sun slanted, still bright on wooded ridges, but throwing the timbered hollows into shade, blending sycamore and sourwood, locust and willow, in the shadows of evening.

Opal and her husband, Dallie Cook, who live up in Kopperston, drove in clear to the house, the car creeping and jolting over sharp ridges of rock.

The older girls helped feed the young ones and put them to bed. The light faded.

Dawn would be breaking over Korea's bare hills where refugees still fled before the rolling force of the North Korean Communist armies. Aircraft of the United Nations took off, bombed objectives; some returned to their bases, some were shot down. Americans, caught in a pocket by the Red advance, fought their way out again. . . .

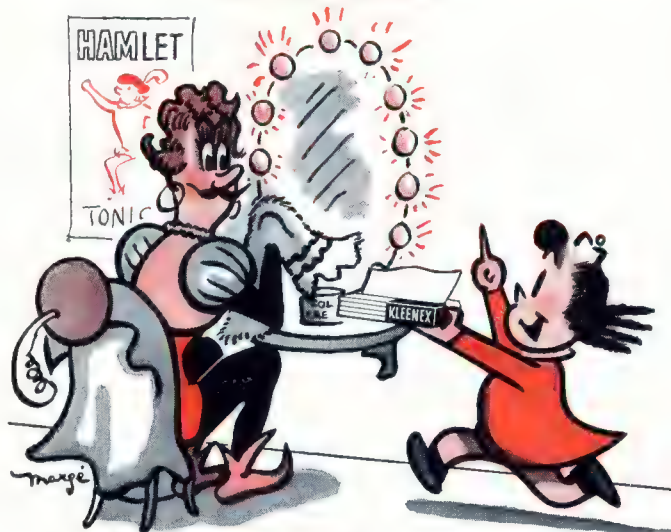
Over the other half of earth the night drew on. It shadowed the cathedral in Washington and the tomb of Woodrow Wilson. Once he said, ". . . We need no revolution, we need no excited change; we need only a new point of view and a new method and spirit of counsel."

Night followed the way of the pioneers, westward, moving on from ridge to ridge.

In the hollow, lights glowed from curtained windows. On the porch in gentle darkness the Shadrack grown-folks sat together, the silence of the night broken by the murmur of a child settling down to sleep, the call of an owl through the timber; and under all, restless as the heart of a mountain man, the voice of the fork water, whispering over logs and around boulders on its journey to meet the Guyandot, flowing on into the Ohio, down to the Mississippi, on and on to the Gulf. Finally it would join the earth-girdling sea.

... THE END

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(Continued from page 55)

"Maybe nine, maybe ten," Nick said grimly. "Where are the children?"

"They tight in their rooms. 'Bugwood and Sandy' time. They always got to listen to 'Bugwood and Sandy.'"

Nick tossed his newspaper on the coffee table, then hung up his coat and hat in the foyer closet. "Bugwood and Sandy," he thought—"there's progressive education in family life for you." Bugwood was an incompetent lout of a father who couldn't get to his office without falling through an open manhole. Sandy was the clever, lighthearted modern wife who was always covering her husband's imbecility.

He shook the folds from his newspaper and sat down with it in the living-room just as Kenny came in. Kenny was eight years old, and his son. He was munching a piece of toast covered with peanut butter.

"Hi, Dad."

"I thought your mother told you not to eat toast in the living-room," Nick said, hating himself for saying it but finding himself quite unable to say anything else.

"I'm not spilling any crumbs," Kenny said, offhandedly, and went on munching, spilling crumbs.

"You're going to have your dinner in a few minutes. Don't eat any more now. It will only spoil your appetite."

"Okay, Dad," Kenny said, and continued unruffled with the munching and crumb-spilling.

It snapped, whatever it was, and Nick crossed the room in two strides and knocked the morsel from the boy's hand. "Go to your room and stay there until you're called."

Kenny cast a retreating look of fear and hate at his father. "Gee!" he said, and left.

Miserably, Nick paced the room, feeling helplessly in the wrong. A child needed love, not anger; understanding, not choler; and his father was one of the people who was supposed to love and understand him. He knew that, and knew he had failed again, and he so hadn't wanted to. What tension can make a man do—love tension, business tension, every kind of tension. Baffled and angry, he took his coat and hat from the closet.

"I'm dining out, Cora," he called.

"Oh, but Mr. Williamson," Cora said, "we've got—"

"Yes, I know, Cora, we've got a nice dinner all fixed, but I'm going out anyway. When Mrs. Williamson comes home, tell her I don't know when I'll be back, but she's to wait up, because I want to talk to her. Do you understand?"

"Yes, Mr. Williamson."

Nick went out, slamming the door behind him.

When he got to a restaurant, he went straight to the bar. He had a Manhattan, let the thought flicker through his mind *I think I'll get drunk*, and let the thought go. Of course, you could knock yourself out in gin-mills, if you wanted to. Or you could look around. But when all was said and done, nothing took the same place in a man's life that a wife did. Either she filled that place or she didn't. This time there'd be no ducking the issue. He'd have to figure out what was eating the heart out of his marriage, and decide what to do, and do it.

As he ate his meal, with the habit of the trained legal mind briefing a case, he let one point after another fall into place, and by the time he had finished dinner, he knew what he was going to do.

It's funny, he thought, how little attention you pay to the background of the person you marry, until it's too late. It is assumed that all backgrounds of equal niceness will get on well together.

Take himself and Janet. He could remember the first date they'd had after Janet had told her family about him.

"You're going to be a sensation, darling," she said. "Mother thinks you have a very nice background."

"Oh, she does, does she?"

"Oh, now," Janet said, "don't balk, for heaven's sake. A boy always has to run the gamut."

And he hadn't balked, really. He thought Mr. Robbins was a genial sort, and Mrs. Robbins a presentable old party, although too forward. The way he'd felt about Janet then, it wouldn't have mattered much who her parents were.

"Well," he had said, "present my compliments and tell them that I have also examined their backgrounds, and found them satisfactory."

"Now, Nick," Janet had said. "Don't get on your high horse."

Looking back on it, though, there were points in her background that would bear review. He remembered one time during their engagement when he had gone downtown to have lunch with her father.

"Come on up to the office a minute," Mr. Robbins had said, after they had finished lunch. "I want you to meet the boys."

The office turned out to be a two-

by-four hideout in a respectably ancient building on West Forty-third Street. It was furnished with three or four roll-top desks and an equal number of elderly gentlemen. These were "the boys." It was a curious place, and the next time he saw Janet, he asked her about it.

"What does your old man do, anyway?" he said. "Run a book?"

"Oh, my goodness, no. Father takes care of the estate. Mother has the money, of course."

Mother has the money, of course. That explained a lot, once you took the time to consider it.

Janet's grandfather, Mrs. Robbins' father (he learned, as their marriage went on), had been a small dry-goods merchant in Victorian New York—thrifty, prudent and successful. Prices of business property began to rise. He let them rise, sold at the top, put the money in stocks, sold at the top again, and found himself a rich man. Nick put it down to fool luck, but the Robbins family tradition was that Grandfather Hartnell had a business acumen that approached, perhaps actually achieved, genius.

Just how the simple-hearted Charlie Robbins had entered the charmed circle had never been made entirely clear. But Grandfather Hartnell's "fortune" had enabled Mrs. Robbins to stifle any spark of initiative her husband had ever known. His family had fallen into the habit of treating him as a genial incompetent, a rôle he good-naturedly accepted.

For the first time, an important truth about his marriage took shape, full and clear, in Nick Williamson's mind. Janet, his wife, had been raised to believe that the wife was supposed to be the dominant member of the family.

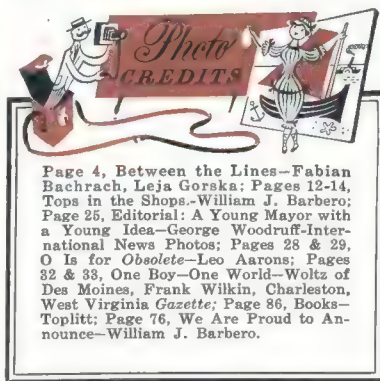
No such notion had ever had any currency, he reflected, in his own background. His father had sired four children and put them all through college, accomplishing the latter job by means of a fluid he always described as the sweat of his brow.

Nick remembered one time when he was in high school and on the football team and there had been a game he particularly wanted his father to see. Most of their games had been on Saturday afternoons, but this one, for some reason he had forgotten, happened to be on a Friday. He had asked his father to go, and his father had taken it almost as an affront. Friday was a working day.

"A man's job is to work," he had intoned. "You'll find that out, young man, once you get out into the world."

The world, as his father described it, was an uninviting place. His father had been out in it for some time, and was pretty well on to its ways. He had taken a run-down blacksmith shop owned by his father and parlayed it into a building-hardware concern that supplied all of Silsbee County, Indiana, and even shipped to Indianapolis, Detroit and Chicago. His family felt that this qualified him to speak with authority on almost any subject.

"John wears the pants at our house," his mother used to say, as if it were kind of silly, and also kind of nice.



Page 4, Between the Lines—Fabian Bachrach, Leja Gorska; Pages 12-14, Tops in the Shops—William J. Barbero; Page 25, Editorial: A Young Mayor with a Young Idea—George Woodruff—International News Photos; Pages 28 & 29, O Is for Obsolete—Leo Aarons; Pages 32 & 33, One Boy—One World—Wolff of Des Moines, Frank Wilkin, Charleston, West Virginia Gazette; Page 86, Books—Toplitt; Page 76, We Are Proud to Announce—William J. Barbero.

It came, Nick Williamson told himself, to this: *He* had been raised to believe that the husband was the dominant member of the family. So!

When Janet and he had first met, Nick had been a raw young import from the legal department of a Midwest traction company. Janet had been a fledgling dress designer with what her employer considered "real promise." She had worn her black hair, at the time, in a precise pageboy with level bangs. When she looked up with wondering brown eyes, no young lawyer, however thorough his legal training, could long remain entirely objective.

Even during this phase, they had discussed her career. He was aware, in a general way, that many women did have careers. But he regarded it as something like the RH factor, or divorce—something that might affect millions of other people, but never himself. So far as Janet was concerned, he felt that a woman's place was in the home—his home.

To this Janet, miraculously, had agreed. But he soon found out that Mrs. Robbins had monopolized the feminine as well as the masculine prerogatives in her family, and had never taught, or even permitted, either of her daughters to cook.

So Janet had started from scratch at twenty-three. To work up a repertoire, she had given her new husband a different dish out of the cookbook every day

for seventy consecutive days. Everything that had ever happened to bride's cooking in song and fable happened to poor Janet's. Nick used to call it *The Ten Weeks that Shook the World*.

And there was the time he had come home to find Janet in tears, her face and practically everything else in the place covered with something that looked like soot. Somehow, she had managed to hook up the vacuum cleaner so it blew dust out of the dustbag instead of into it. The first time she had bathed Kenny as a very new baby, the strain had been such that she had demanded a shaker of Martinis, and finished it, so Nick had to put them both to bed.

She won through, though, and got to be a good cook, an able mother and a wonderful, wonderful wife. Until two years ago.

"Darling, listen," she had said one evening, all unexpectedly, "the most exciting thing has happened. Remember Adelaide Renlon, the girl I used to work with in my dress-designing days? Well, she's opening her own shop, and she wants me to go in with her."

She was wearing the gentle, wheeling look.

"Please," she said. "The children are in school now, and the house runs itself. And I need it. I get so bored, sometimes."

He knew she was not asking his permission, only his agreement. This he was inclined to give. How was he to know it would make Janet an entirely different person? Nothing, he concluded, was better calculated to rock a man's

reason than to find his wife's body familiar and intact, but the person who used to inhabit it gone.

Janet always came home late these days, tired but talkative. She would kick off her shoes, sprawl on the couch, and begin.

"The most amazing thing happened today," was her standard opening.

The amazing thing would be about somebody who had copied a button from Paris, only the copy turned out to be better than the original. Nick would wait politely for a chance to talk about his own work or about things that mattered to them both, but the chance never came. When the amazing thing had been recounted, Janet would stretch, yawn, and pick up her shoes.

"I'm pooped, darling," she'd say. "Let's have dinner, so I can get to bed." And once in bed she dropped off to sleep in that exhausted way that always made him feel it would be an imposition to wake her.

Nick Williamson had worked through dessert now, and was having coffee. He went on with his imaginary brief. Along with becoming a different person, Janet had, bit by imperceptible bit, during the past two years, taken more and more of the family management under her control—the checkbook, the car, their vacation plans. Any one thing passed without particular notice. It was the trend. And the meaning of the trend now came to him.

Janet was getting to be just like her mother!

It was monstrous, but true. She was headed straight toward becoming another Mrs. Robbins.

Nick put his coffee cup down on its saucer with a sharp ring that brought the waitress scurrying with his check.

His father, he told himself, may have been provincial, but his father was a man, and he was his father's son. He paid his check, left the tip, took his coat and hat, and headed for home, his jaw set.

The children were in bed when he got there. Cora had finished in the kitchen and retired to her room, and Janet lay on the sofa.

"Oh, hello, darling," she said. "Eat out?"

She had kicked off her shoes and was rubbing her stockings toes caressingly over the pillows of the sofa. On the coffee table was a coffeepot and one cup. She was still in street clothes—a black wool dress with big red buttons and a wide black belt with a red buckle. Her hair was tumbled but not untidy, and the whole ensemble sharpened in Nick's mind his awareness of her.

"Ate out," he said. "Didn't Cora tell you?"

"I believe she did mention something about it," Janet said. "Silly boy. Cora had a nice dinner. Roast pork."

"You've got to quit your job," Nick said.

Janet looked away. "How was that?"

"I said you've got to quit your job."

"I thought that was what you said. Well," she added, "I'm not going to."

"Like hell you aren't," Nick said.

She sat up and drew her legs under

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her, poured some coffee into the cup, sipped it and put it down.

"What's the matter with you to-night, Nick?"

"I don't like the way we live. We aren't a family any more. We're a boarding-house, and not a very good one."

Janet bowed her head almost as if she'd been struck. "Oh," she said.

"It's that job," Nick went on. "It's taken you away from us. This family doesn't need the money. It does need you. You've got to give it up."

Janet put down her cup. "I can't give it up, Nick."

"You mean you won't?"

"No, Nicky, no. I mean I can't." Janet smoothed her skirt nervously, with the tips of her fingers. "I only wish there were some way I could make you understand."

Nick got up, and stood.

"Janet," he said, "they took the word 'obey' out of contracts like ours some time ago. I have no authority over you except what you grant me. I hate to sound like a lawyer on this, but it just happens that I am one."

"Now," he went on, "by whatever authority that may be, I ask you just once more. Quit that job."

Janet stood up and faced him, desperation in her eyes.

"No," she said.

Nick walked to the window and looked out.

"I can't do it, Nick. Even if it means—"

"Go ahead. Say it."

"Divorce."

Nick knew this was no mere threat tossed out in a game to have her way once more. Not only was she prepared to pay the cost, but she was aware of what that cost would be. The air pressed heavy with memories of every good and irreplaceable thing that had ever happened between them. She knew what they'd be losing. And still she meant it.

Nick walked slowly to the door, then stopped and turned.

"I'd like to have custody, please," he said, and went on into their bedroom.

He looked around the room. It seemed suddenly alien, unfamiliar. He thought about packing a bag and going somewhere. What did he want to pack a bag for? To go where, for what reason? Surely there was some other way, somehow.

He went back to the living-room.

Janet had turned her head against the back of the sofa and was sobbing. He stood and watched her. He wanted to walk over to the sofa and reach down and tumble her hair and say, "there, there, now, now,"—but that would mean giving in, and he couldn't give in. So he stood and watched her. When you can't say something tender, he thought, you say something tough.

He said, "Are you about through bawling?"

Janet sat up and faced him, her wet cheeks flushed and black eyes snapping.

"Yes," she said. "And as long as I live I'll never bawl again about you, or about your hayseed notions of what a woman is supposed to be and to do!"

"If the idea that a woman looks best as a mother and a wife is a hayseed no-

NEWS ABOUT MEDICINE

BY MARTIN GUMPERT, M. D.

New Help for Marriage Adjustment Problems

Many young wives who have found little pleasure in sex relations in marriage are being helped toward a normal and happy marriage relationship as a result of recent research. Doctors have found that the emotional adjustment most women have to make to improve or correct frigidity does not usually require a prolonged and expensive treatment.

To many discouraged young women it is reassuring to know that newly wedded wives rarely have satisfactory sex experiences during the early months of marriage. These wives need encouragement, and the knowledge that gratification will be achieved in time. Doctors have discovered that their patients are often handicapped by faulty attitudes. Because a woman has experienced disappointment and frustration, she must not allow her attitude to be one of indifference. This attitude can lead to deep-seated feelings of hostility and resentment which may make her case more difficult for her doctor to treat.

A feeling of complete security is necessary to most young wives. Living with parents or in-laws can result in self-consciousness about sex. Often seemingly trivial things such as no shade at the window, or an unlocked bedroom door, may set up conflicts that cause frigidity. Personal habits, also, can be the cause of serious emotional maladjustments to sex in marriage. A brief interview between a young husband and his wife's doctor often shows the husband ways in which he can help relieve the tensions that are preventing his wife's happy normal adjustment to marriage.

Training for a happy marriage should start early. Doctors believe that parents today have a responsibility to give their children an emotional background that will make their marriage adjustment easier than it has been, in many cases, for our present generation of brides and grooms. Most children begin to show an interest in things connected with sex at two-and-one-half to three-and-one-half years of age. This is the age of curiosity about all things. A child doesn't think of his question as a sex question. It's just something that puzzles him. If he gets the impression that he is asking about something wrong, that his curiosity is unnatural, he may get distorted ideas that will carry over into adult life. Modern doctors offer these five rules for the guidance of parents:

1. The home atmosphere should be characterized by security and affection.
2. Parents and older brothers and sisters should never claim that boys are superior to girls, or girls to boys.
3. Childbirth suffering should never be discussed in the presence of a child.
4. Parents should take an unembarrassed attitude toward a child's inevitable sex questions. Toilet training should be a natural, matter-of-fact process.
5. Every mother should prepare her daughter for the onset of menstruation by explaining it as a natural function, part of the process of growing up.



when the cold war gets **HOT!**

THE TIME of this story is 1962 — but it could be tomorrow!

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tion, I'm a hick," he said, "and a proud one."

"The year is 1950," Janet said, "the place, suburban New York. I've a life to live, and I'm not going to spend it washing dishes."

"Many women," Nick said, "contrive to give their families something of themselves, and also live lives."

Janet almost screamed, not so much in anger, it seemed to Nick, as in pain, "For God's sake, don't!" She clasped her hands back of her head and bent forward, elbows almost touching, and rolled her head as if to shake away the feelings that tore at each other within her.

Nick, in his imagination, was judge, now—the legal machinery ground on. He considered evidence, reviewed testimony, remembered things—things about Janet he had forgotten; forgotten because he had never really wanted to admit them. "Go away, Nick," Janet said. "Please go away."

He remembered the tears and exasperation of her struggles with the cook-stove, a thing for which she had no aptitude and no love. There had been the same note of submerged distaste in every domestic task she had ever undertaken. She had been a dress designer when he married her, and she was still one. Now she had to be herself again, because she had used up the strength it had taken to be somebody else.

"You're so damned uncompromising, Nick," Janet said.

The whole meaning of what he had been thinking, and saying, and remembering this long autumn evening did not arrive in Nick Williamson's mind all at once. The crystal of truth shaped slowly.

"What did you say, Janet?"

"I said," Janet's voice was not accusing now, but regretful, "that you're so damned uncompromising. Like your father."

Nick Williamson threw his head back and laughed.

Janet looked up at him, her eyes full of curiosity. "What's funny?"

"I'd just been thinking," he said, "that you were so damned uncompromising. Like your mother!"

Most of Janet's smile was concealed by her handkerchief. "I am getting to be a little like Mom, I guess," she said.

Nick Williamson went over to the window, and looked out. It was dark outside, but there were many lights from the apartment windows—the lights of people living together, and doing what had to be done to make that possible. "Suppose you and I could ever leave our families entirely behind us," he said, "and start being completely just ourselves, together?"

"Oh, Nick, when you talk like that—" Janet said. She looked up at him, and there was hope in her eyes now.

"If we could kind of take inventory," Nick said, still studying the nightscape from the window.

"If I'd stop doing a few of the things I know gripe the daylight out of you," Janet said.

Nick struggled to believe his ears. In wonderment, he went on rashly, "If I'd be less of a sorehead."

"Oh, Nicky!" Janet turned her head to the back of the sofa again and cried softly. It was the sobbing, now, not of despair, but of release.

He went over to her, and reached down to take her in his arms, to hold her wet face against his shoulder. He could tell, from the way Janet's arm reached up and curved itself around his shoulder, that the party of the first part would probably negotiate. But he had no idea the conference would open with any such words as:

"Oh, my darling!"

He held her in his arms. His father? Well, he thought, his father had been a good man, too. But he had lived in another generation, in a different culture. And with a different woman. Nick wasn't going to let them milquetoast him as they had Mr. Robbins; that was sure. But on the other hand, maybe his case against Janet's job was a little too harsh. He'd let it ride for now, and see what happened.

He reached over and flicked the lamp switch, and they were in darkness. He made a place for himself on the sofa, beside Janet.

Later, sometime later, as they lay looking dreamily out the window at the lights of other apartments, Janet said, "Gosh, Nicky, I'm glad we had a fight. It clears things."

"Yes," Nick said.

"You know what I think?"

"No," Nick said. "Tell me."

"Well—" Janet began. She raised herself on an elbow, and drew a deep breath, and began to talk, haltingly, playing with Nick's tie and looking down at it as she spoke. "It's about families. You can have a family where the father is the big cheese, or you can have a family where the mother is the big cheese. But the best families are those where nobody is trying to be the big cheese."

"Two medium-size cheeses," Nick suggested.

"I'm serious," Janet said, but she gave Nick's tie a playful yank, and smiled. "I think I know what's been happening to us. For a long time, I let you be the big noise, like your father. Then I decided to be the boss, like Mother—and I went a little overboard, I'm afraid. Maybe our job is to show that there can be marriage between equals."

"It seems to me," Nick, or the lawyer in him, said, "that you've given an excellent summation."

Janet put her head on his shoulder again, and wiggled her body closer to him. "Nicky, you don't really want me to give up the shop, do you?"

"Not really, I guess. If only you'd make a little more room for—us."

"I will," Janet said. "Oh, my darling, I will."

Nick smiled and lifted her chin. "You don't want me to give up the law, do you?"

"No," Janet said, and added, in a voice much smaller than the one she'd been using, "Don't give up laying it down every now and then, either."

Somehow, when Janet said that, Nick was very glad, and he said so with the pressure of his arms. . . . THE END



(Continued from page 49)

but a deeper instinct told her that he should escape from his day into this quiet hour, and that no part of that day should follow him. Tonight, he seemed unable to escape. He refilled his glass and sat down wearily.

"I wish that O'Shea would take a drink," he said moodily. "That lad just won't unkind. He is working harder than Father Coleman did. God knows, I warned Coleman, too."

Beryl looked at him thoughtfully. He had warnings for everyone but himself. If another man his age put on weight as he had in the past year, he would raise the roof. She understood that weight, the basic unhappiness of his position that caused him to escape in small physical indulgences from a situation that was beyond his resolving. Still, he had been happier lately with so much more work to do. She did not make matters more difficult for him by criticism.

"The priest is very good," she said. "He has that 'it' quality that draws people."

"What does it get him?"

"That depends on where he thinks that he is going."

Dave Sigman snorted. "Where does sand go in swift water? He is out after souls, just as Father Coleman was before him; diving after every grain of sand that comes down the river. Damn it! China is a vast breeding pen, pouring bodies into the stream of life faster than you can count them. Souls, too, if anyone wants to figure that way. Nobody can catch them all; but any time—tonight, next week or next year—O'Shea can dip his bucket in the stream and get all of the sand that he wants, or that he can handle. He does not have to kill himself today or this week. The supply is inexhaustible. But can I tell him that?"

Beryl sipped her drink. "You had a broken-up porter on the operating table for an hour," she said. "Will he live?"

"He will." Dave Sigman's head came up. "I did a damned good job, even if I say so. Why?"

"That's my question—why? There will be another Chinese along in a minute."

Dave Sigman stared at her across the room, belligerently at first, then less belligerently. He grinned slowly. "Okay. You win. He's a grain of sand, too."

The mood against which she fought settled down on Beryl. She emptied her glass and straightened her legs. She was a woman who had been born for New York, a woman who loved smart cocktail lounges, intimate fashion showings, good clothes and people to see her wear-

ing them, the security and the touch of feminine arrogance that belongs to a woman who is married to a successful and accomplished surgeon. She had just so many years!

She cupped her chin in her hands. "What's it all about, Dave?" she said softly.

"I don't know." Dave Sigman stared at his glass. "O'Shea is supposed to know the answer to that. I don't believe that he does. We do what we have to do."

"Who makes us?"

He shrugged, his eyes thoughtful. "Men are captives of circumstance. Let's put it this way. The stupid and the unthinking are held in thrall by their own incompetence. Any of us can see that."

Beryl nodded, and his eyes came up to meet hers. "So a man tries to develop reason and the ability to guide his own actions intelligently. What happens? He develops a sense of responsibility, too, even if he never gave that a thought. And the sense of responsibility holds him in thrall—very often in the service of the stupid and the unthinking."

He spread his hands in a gesture that implied that there was nothing more to life than that, but his slow smile mocked his own attempt at simplification.

Beryl lit a cigarette, and she kept on shaking the match long after it had gone out. "There's something else," she said thoughtfully, "but I don't know what it is. Maybe it is a common purpose that we have to serve whether we want to serve or don't." She shook the cigarette impatiently as she had shaken the match. "Hell, Dave! I don't know how we got into all of this, unless it's the rain—"

"It could be. Remember Maugham's play? It rained so hard that the preacher was chasing a floozie all around an island."

Beryl narrowed her eyes. "I don't believe that it was an island. It was a boarding-house, wasn't it? But never mind! Our preacher isn't chasing any girls, rain or no rain."

Dave Sigman shook his head. He was a full-blooded, sensual man with no pretense to spirituality, nor any great interest in religion, but he was conventional in the sense that he expected people to live up to the labels that they wore. He could be tolerant to the point of complete indifference, to the vices which so often brought men to him for repair, but he could be unforgiving to a derelict in duty. He accepted as fact the strict rules governing the conduct of Catholic clergy, even to the point of celibacy, of which he disapproved heartily; he expected no less than complete acceptance of those rules from the clergy for which they were written. He would not have made the remark that Beryl made; it would not have occurred to him.

Beryl knew that, and she interpreted correctly the shake of his head. "I think that Anne should go home," she said slowly. "She's been too long in China."

"She never should have come to China. But what's the matter with her? She looks all right to me."

"She is, physically! She is more churned up inside than she realizes, that's all. She's making a hero out of Father

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O'Shea. She does not seem to know how much she talks about him, and how revealing that is."

Dave Sigman swore softly. He poured himself another drink, measuring the amount carefully. "That won't do," he said. "You better jolt her a bit. You can do it better than I can."

"It isn't her fault, Dave. That man has a lot of sheer physical pull. She's feeling it, but her mind knows that he is a priest, so her mind doesn't accept it. She is mixed up because her brain is doing a bad job of reporting."

"Women!" Dave Sigman made a hopeless gesture with one hand. "Okay! She's a good nurse, but we can't let her become a China case. Let's send her home when the traders come through."

"I think that we should."

They were quiet, looking at each other across the room. They were thinking that "home" was a magic word; it meant the United States; it meant New York. They had thirteen months still to serve, and the Chinese years were long.

Beryl bit her lip. "A sense of responsibility holds us in thrall to the stupid and the unthinking lot," she said. "Maybe we'll be China cases, too."

Dr. Sigman laid his glass on the small end table, no longer interested in it. His voice was husky. "You'll stay as long as I do," he said, "but would you respect me if I quit?"

He rose to his feet as he put the question. Beryl saw him coming across the room to her and she rose to meet him.

"No, Dave," she said.

She was in his arms then, and she cried a little, but her hand was firm against the pad of flesh that covered his broad shoulders. His beard was rough against her cheek.

The rain stopped at seven-thirty in the evening. A high wind, blowing across the peak of the Two Sisters, slashed through the heavily massed clouds and scattered them across a lightening sky. The moon, hidden for more than a week, seemed to race with the routed cloud cavalry, passing them and being passed, shining brightly for a moment, then disappearing, to emerge again in an illusion of swift movement. The valley below, untouched by that violent tropospheric wind, was wrapped in sudden hush, and the mission windows shone clearly once more, no longer floating in fog, but obviously units in the larger structures that supported them.

Jim Carmody left the hospital and walked across the mission grounds toward his own quarters. The man on whom Dr. Sigman had performed an intricate series of operations in the morning was conscious now and wishing, obviously, that he were not. The "tomorrow" of which a Chinese rarely thinks was perched above that man's bed, and the man was less concerned about his soul than about the endless bowls of rice as yet unearned, perhaps beyond his earning. He was a porter, trained to the carrying of heavy loads over mountain trails, knowing nothing else, unskilled in any other thing that a man may do. The load that fell with him down the side of the mountain, and crushed him at the bottom, had ended his carrying forever, but life remained in

him. Carmody had no answer to that.

He stood for a moment, conscious that the sky was vast, that the smell of rain-soaked earth was good and that the air was clean. There was a sense of freedom from oppression in the knowledge that the rain was no longer beating down, that one could see again the mountain on the far side of the river, and the moon in the sky and an occasional star. He breathed deeply.

He had promised that poor devil in the hospital that he would pray for him, and he did not like to think about that. He was an actor in a pageant of faith, but his prayers were no good to anyone.



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He looked toward the school building, an adobe building like the church, and the second oldest structure in the mission group. It was built in the shape of a "U" around a small patio, and it had housed the first priests, then the first small hospital unit, now the school. There was a single lighted window on the north side of the patio.

Anne was in the room with the light. She had not been on duty at the hospital tonight, but she had a class of younger girls to teach in the duties of a nurse's aide. There were no forty-hour weeks for the white personnel of the mission.

Carmody looked at his watch. She would be through with the class in ten minutes. He had an irrational desire to see her, to hear her speak, to speak to her. The spell of the rain-washed night was on him, and the air was gentle with the promise of spring. He was weary of problems, of duty and of responsibility. He had today, and the night that belonged to it, but tomorrow was more threat than promise, the closed end of a dead-end street and not to be dwelt upon. He walked slowly toward the school, on the south side of the patio.

There was a room there, the first room on the south leg of the "U," that had been set aside as a music-room and dedicated from time to time to the hope that Chinese could be trained as a choir to sing in Latin. Either because the hope was unfounded or the teachers inadequate, the choir was still a dream project, symbolized by an upright piano lightly filmed with dust.

Carmody lighted the octagonal lantern on the pedestal behind the stool. The presence of a piano in this inaccessible mountain mission did not astonish him. Mieh Yang had had two—one of them, improbable though it seemed, an item of loot from the wartime Burma Road. Carmody had played the lammas instruments many times, and this one not at all. He touched the keys lightly, caressing them, not impatient to play, but content for the moment in the knowledge that the instrument was under his hand and that he could command melody from it.

Remembered music moved in his brain, some of it good music. His fingers slid along the keys, and the faltering notes began to arrange themselves, seeking for harmony. He rejected the abstractions in music as he had been rejecting, when he could, the abstractions in living. His fingers sought the simple, the concrete, the melody of song, the music that lived as a vehicle to a singing voice, not great in itself but linked in memory with the lyrics which rode on it.

Because China, in a way, suggested it, he played a few bars of "The Road to Mandalay"; because the mission atmosphere did not support it, he stopped. It had been Mieh Yang's favorite, and he sang it often for Yang. Mary Yin had liked it, too. He switched abruptly to "Show Boat" music and, inevitably, "Of Man River." He had a baritone voice, and his musical memories in the field of song ran to baritone numbers. Yang had liked "Of Man River," too, and

"Glory Road" and "Water Boy." He was wishing that he had not been so prodigal of his repertoire during those nights at the lamasery. A taint clung now to all the old favorites, making them wrong, somehow, for the time and the place.

He was conscious of the passing minutes and of his true purpose in playing. He wanted to see Anne and talk to her and listen to her. He could not seek her out, but she would be less than human if she did not seek the source of music when she was in the same building with it.

His fingers found Gilbert and Sullivan, playing in and around the tricky melodies. He had not played any of this for Yang, did not remember it too well. There were several things from "The Mikado" that fitted into the atmosphere in which he lived, but they got away from him. "Pinafore," which he disliked, was fresh in his memory, and some of the "Pirates." His fingers strayed into "Yeomen of the Guard," which few people seemed to know well. He had sung the rôle of *Jack Point* in his last year in college; the Glee Club operetta.

He was remembering that, tapping out the "Here's a man of jollity" chorus, and he did not hear the door open. He looked away from the piano as Anne crossed the room. There were three or four young Chinese girls hovering in the doorway, wide smiles on their faces. Anne was smiling, too.

"We could not imagine who was playing, Father," she said. "No one around here ever plays—"

Carmody was suddenly embarrassed. His stratagem had worked, and it seemed now like a juvenile thing. He had been sitting here, showing off, hoping that a girl would notice him. Because he knew it for what it was, he tried to put another name on it.

"It's a way of resting," he said. "I haven't played for some time."

His fingers had gone on without the directing mind, seeking of themselves to cover his embarrassment, as fingers so often do in fumbling with cigarettes or doodling on paper. They were playing softly the introduction to *Jack Point's* song, the "Jester" song. Something in the girl's eyes betrayed the fact that she recognized it, that she was one of those who knew the "Yeomen."

"Do you sing, Father?" she said.

He smiled, sensing challenge of a sort, and his fingers were firm and decisive now. He sang the Jester's introduction:

"I have a song to sing, O!"

He threw his own challenge when he played the accompaniment for the soprano. Did she know it, or merely recognize it? Her voice, clear and sweet, lyric, answered him:

"Sing me your song, O!"

His fingers quickened. This was fun. How long since he had done a duet with anyone? How long since he had sung with a woman? His voice was deep and resonant, a better-than-average baritone. He sang to her:

"It is sung to the moon
By a lovelorn loon
Who fled from the mocking throng, O!"

It was the song of the fool, and his brain said, "How damn appropriate! I had forgotten how the words went." His voice went on with it to the "sighed for the love of a ladye," and Anne came in on the "Heighdy" chorus. He warmed to it again, and his brain ceased its mockery.

Anne was singing to him now:

"I have a song to sing, O!"

He gave it back:

"It is sung with the ring
Of the songs maids sing
Who love with a love lifelong, O!"

She was slightly flushed, and her voice was a trifle unsure. When she faltered on the words, forgetting them, she made a gesture of resignation. "You win, Father. I don't know it any more."

"I was surprised when you knew it at all. What else do you know?"

They were stirred, stimulated, excited; as impromptu tennis partners might be after an unexpected victory, or swimmers who have raced each other to a float, or any two people, man and woman, who have shared an experience and found in each other an unexpected potential. It was Anne who remembered the nurse's aid class.

"Oh," she said. "My girls. They have a bed check. They have to be in after class. They live at the orphanage."

The girls were lined up against the wall, grinning with delight at an entertainment so sudden and unexpected, something so much more interesting than a class on reading thermometers and sterilizing instruments. Carmody rose from the piano and spoke to them. Anne was already herding them out, reluctant but aware of responsibility. Carmody stopped her with a gesture.

"They can find their way to the orphanage," he said. "You don't have a bed check."

"No." She hesitated. "But I don't have any right in here, either."

"Nonsense."

He spoke as a man; a man, moreover, who was having a good time. It did not occur to him, until Anne turned slowly back into the room, that he had lost the prerogative of speaking as a mere man when he assumed the authority of a priest of the mission. Rules were his to make, or to set aside, subject always to the approval or disapproval of his small public; no man, regardless of what power or authority he wielded, could control the verdicts of those who watched him, served under him or dealt with him.

He thought of that only briefly, as Anne must have thought of it when she hesitated; then she made her decision and he went back to the piano.

"What else do you know?" he said. She shook her head. "No rôles. Such singing as I have done has been solo."

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Gets in Your Eyes,' 'Indian Love Call'?"

He looked at her inquiringly, and she laughed. "'Mighty Lak a Rose,' 'L'amour, Toujours L'amour,' 'Danny Boy.'"

They nodded together, satisfied. Her voice had been classified. Carmody beat out the drum notes of "Night and Day," but it wasn't right for them, and his groping fingers found nothing that was. The moment had run out. They could not recapture the spontaneity of that first duet, and there was constraint on them. The mood was not right for solos, and almost anything they did now would be, at best, a blending of two solos. Carmody's fingers slowed, then stopped.

"Anticlimax," he said.

"Not at all. I just can't sing with you. I'm not good enough."

"You are more than good enough. I almost fell off the piano stool when you came back at me on the 'Yeomen' stuff."

They laughed together, but it was not as easy and relaxed as it had been before. They had soared out of themselves for a few minutes, but the reality of what they were, and where they were, awaited them when they returned to earth. Anne opened the door and Carmody extinguished the lantern. Bright moonlight fell upon them, and the shadow of the mission gate was a monstrous silhouette on the ground. The mission walls were intensely white, and there was a frosty silver surface on all of the small puddles and pools of the mission yard.

Anne drew a quick sharp breath. "It is like magic," she said. "Like seeing everything transformed by the waving of a wand."

Carmody was stirred. It was a night for the belief in miracles. There was neither time nor distance; only the moonlight. It would be easy to believe that China itself was an illusion and that one could step through one of the night's many mirrors and be out of it.

"Look at the mountain!"

Anne's voice was shaky, and he lifted his head. The summit of the mountain, blurred usually by shadow or sun haze or fog or cloud, was in sharp outline. There were two great heads, unmistakably the heads of women, black against the light sky. The skulls merged, but the faces in profile were strongly etched—brooding faces that looked out, one to the north and one to the south, over the mountains of China.

"So that is why they named it 'The Two Sisters'? I wondered."

"So did I. I've been here over a year, Father, and I never saw it like that before."

Carmody looked at her, at her lifted head and her wide eyes, her slightly parted lips. The mountain awed her, and she did not seem aware of him. She was wearing the white uniform of a nurse, and the white cap, because she had been teaching a class in nursing. The uniform had a crisp, starched quality that dramatized her femininity while all but concealing it.

"You have been here over a year?" he said. "Do you mind telling me why?"

She looked at him, startled. "It isn't a very good reason, Father," she

said. "It isn't anything noble or self-sacrificing. I didn't have any ideal of service nor any desire to nurse Chinese. Dr. Sigman says that I didn't have any sense, either."

She was embarrassed, and her embarrassment communicated itself to Carmody. He regretted the question that had come to him so easily and naturally, but it was too late to withdraw it when she was already launched on her answer. He walked and she walked with him, their shadows long upon the ground. It was so much easier to talk when one was in motion.

"Few people are really noble and self-sacrificing in motive," he said. "We all like to dress up our actions with words and present them at their best—like parents sending their youngsters off to a party. So, don't apologize. You are out here doing a difficult job, no matter why you decided to come."

Anne bit her lip. "Thank you, Father. What I meant was that I do not have anything like a vocation. You see, I am—or was—married."

It was the unexpected statement, and Carmody recoiled. They had followed the duckboards to the gate, and they stood now in its barred shadow. The shadow of the arch, with its graceful upsweep, lay like a dragon on the ground a few yards away. The world was silver-white and silent.

Carmody's voice betrayed him. "Married?" he said. "You?"

"Yes, Father." She looked up at him, small beside him. "That's why I came. He was a pilot. He flew the Hump. I had word that he was missing.



"For a minute, I thought you had a mustache!"

They never—" Her voice choked slightly. "They never found him. I never had proof. When the newspapers carried stories about the Lolo tribes and rumors that some American flyers were still their prisoners—" She paused again. "Well, I wanted to come here."

It wasn't as absurd as it sounded. Carmody knew that. He had heard the rumors and the wild tales himself. For nearly a year after his convalescence at the lamasery, before habit began to hold him, he had been held to Mieh Yang, in part at least, by the hope that he would be able to find and release some of those captive flyers. He had become convinced, ultimately, that there were no captive pilots and had been none; at least, not in the wide province of Mieh Yang.

Investigated the missions," the girl continued, "and I discovered that this one was on the edge of Lolo country." She made one aimless, half-apologetic gesture with her right hand. "I was a nurse, of course. I had a stupid, romantic idea that Tom might be brought in to the mission hospital; that if I were there, he would be."

"And the mission people let you come?"

She shook her head. "They tried to dissuade me. They told me that if my husband were found, I would not have to be here. They told me that it was a great improbability and that I had a romantic notion. I was very stubborn."

She was looking up into his face, and it was easy for him to believe that

she could be very stubborn and to accept that stubbornness as the necessary human leaven of all else that she was: not necessarily a grave fault, perhaps even a lovable trait.

"So you came, anyway?" he said.

"I came because, ultimately, they let me come. Dr. Sigman and Beryl were here and they welcomed help."

"I see."

They were walking again by common consent. The girl's eyes were seeing something far away. "I believe that I always knew that Tom was dead," she said softly. "I did want to know, to be sure, but I must have known inside. It wasn't any shock at all when I discovered that my ideas of a mission hospital were romantic notions, as I had been told that they were. I knew before I was here a week that Tom would never be brought in to the mission, that nobody believed that there were American prisoners of the Lolos."

"And yet you stayed?"

"What else could I do? Dr. Sigman and Beryl did need help. You know how it has been yourself. All of the work of the mission was waiting for you. There was a lot of work waiting for me. It had to be done."

Carmony knew. It was a subtle trap. One did a simple, necessary thing and immediately there sprang up, all around him, a hundred things, equally necessary, each one simple in itself but complicated in the mass. Anne had become necessary and needed. With some natures, no other ties are necessary, and with those two ties, they are linked to circumstance, unable to break free.

He said her full name, Anne Scott, in his mind, thinking about her, and suddenly a bell rang in his consciousness. He stopped walking.

"Your husband's name was Tom," he said, "and he was a pilot? Tom Scott?"

The urgency in his voice, the sudden quickening, came from a mind off guard. The girl felt it and she faced him, startled.

"Yes! Tom Scott. Did you know him, Father? Do you know of him?"

Her hand reached, and she all but gripped his coat before she controlled herself. Carmony passed his hand across his face. It was a priestly gesture, a little like a blessing, but hurried. He did not mean it as anything at all. He was brushing away a moment of forgetfulness, an almost fatal slip.

"No. No," he said. "Of course not. I was moved by your story. I was wishing I could help."

The words were sheer hypocrisy and he was ashamed of them, the hastily improvised lines of an actor faltering in his rôle. Jim Carmony had known Tom Scott very well, had flown with him on his first tour of duty in China. He remembered him clearly—a tall, gangling young man with an easy smile and a lazy drawl. He knew, moreover, that Tom Scott was dead, very definitely dead. A priest named Peter John O'Shea, however, would not know about Tom Scott and couldn't know about him.

The girl said, "Oh!"

Her hand dropped and they were walking again, circling back toward the hospital where a few lights showed. There were no other lights. The build-

ings of the mission were wrapped in their own darkness, and the moonlight had lost its bright intensity. The singing and the walking and the talking had consumed unnoted time, and the hour was late. As it had been in the room beside the piano, a moment of near-intimacy had developed spontaneously and was gone.

They stopped again near the door to the doctor's house, where Anne Scott had a room. The girl lifted her head, but whatever she planned to say went unsaid, and she looked away quickly. Carmony was standing awkwardly, his hands by his sides; too rigidly so. His shocked mind registered the unbidden thought as the girl turned her eyes away: "There's that between us, the lodestone. We're both feeling it. Tonight was a mistake."

He had no words to speak aloud. Anne did speak, huskily, her voice slightly muffled. "There's another thing, Father. I haven't been to confession. You must have wondered—"

"No. No. Not at all."

He had not wondered—he had feared. Every time that he entered the confessional he dreaded the possibility that Anne Scott would come in to him. It would have been the crowning outrage. He was too vehement now with his "no" and it was not what a priest would have said, but Anne Scott did not notice. In spite of her denials to Beryl, she had been conscious of the man where her faith told her that she should see only the priest. To her, it was a shameful thing, a sin for the confessing; but not to be confessed to the man who was the object of it. Her sense of guilt, of wrong, blinded her to the truth that Carmony saw—that the attraction lay between them, a magnet drawing on each of them.

Carmony was exonerated, in her mind, without thought or reason, because he wore the collar and the vestments and the trappings of the priesthood: the blame was all her own.

"I have been too long in China, I guess," she said brokenly. "Too long for me, that is. I am a little bit mixed up, Father. I am not even thinking straight about spiritual matters." She made a small groping gesture with her right hand. "I will have to go away, I think, when the traders come."

Carmony's mouth was dry. "We are all mixed up at times," he said, "and especially about spiritual matters."

Her eyes came up to him. "Thank you, Father. You are very kind. It has been such a lovely evening—"

She broke off suddenly, routed and in flight. She ran up the steps of the doctor's house. Carmony watched her, but she did not look back; he said, "Good night, Anne," and she did not hear him. When he turned away, there was still moonlight, but the shadow silhouettes were less sharp, the white of buildings and fences a ghostly gray. The mission compound was a lonely place, with two smoky lanterns burning beside the gate and rainwater standing stagnant in small puddles.

He thought, as he walked toward his own house, of Tom Scott, who was dead, and of the small uncertainties, the brief moments of mischance that change the

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lives of men and women. A rock had turned under the foot of a porter this morning, and when the man stumbled, he took his partner and himself down the side of the mountain with the heavy load that they carried. If his foot had touched the trail an inch to the right or to the left?

He thought about that porter in the hospital, of his piteous, pleading eyes, his hoarse whisper: "Pray for me, Shen Fu."

He had promised and he had not prayed. Carmody stood for a moment before the church. He had said before, in his own mind, that his prayers were no good to anyone; that an actor who is praying in a rôle is merely speaking lines. Yet, he had prayed before he ever dreamed of such a rôle as this. He reached into his pocket for his keys, his hands reaching a decision while his brain faltered.

The church was cool and filled with a deep hush, dark save for the red sanctuary light that burned above the altar. Carmody knelt at the altar rail, and he prayed. His rôle dropped from him, and he prayed for the Chinese who had never learned to do anything but carry heavy loads, and he prayed for Anne Scott and for all of the people who had trusted him to do what he had no power to do. The momentum of prayer, once set in motion, carried him along. He did not think about time, and he did not hear the soft sigh of the big door as it was slowly opened.

He rose at length and walked up the aisle. Beryl Sigman was sitting in the last pew, and when he paused, startled, she joined him and walked slowly out of the church.

"I did not know."

She interrupted his hesitant beginning. "You are right, Father. I don't pray in churches. I don't sleep well on bright moonlight nights, either."

They stood together before the church, and all of the rest of humanity seemed to be asleep. Carmody had his hands locked behind his back, and he felt tired. Beryl, he supposed, was telling him in her own way that she had been sleepless in the dark house and that she had seen Anne and himself as they walked around the grounds. It was possible that, earlier, she had heard them singing. He had been reckless with the reputation of Father Peter John O'Shea. This woman's voice told him so.

"Moonlight has a restless quality," he said, "which explains the origin of the word 'lunatic.'"

Beryl nodded. "Mission work is difficult, Father," she said. "There are big adjustments to be made out here. You've been working too hard since you came. Would I be presumptuous if I made a suggestion?"

He looked at her sharply. She was an attractive woman. She was a woman of character, a woman who paid, with her husband, the heavy debt of a pledged word. There was hard-won wisdom in her. She did not struggle within her soul over spiritual concepts; she had made them one with her daily living, as he had been unable to do. Her eyes were deep, and there was more understanding

in them than he cared to see. If he had recognized the lodestone between Anne and himself, it was possible that she had recognized it and that she had put her own interpretation on his walk with Anne.

"I would value your suggestion," he said.

Beryl looked out toward the mountain, which was merely a dark mass now, with no sharply etched figures at the crest. "A man in trouble, or worried, or overworked, needs contemporaries, Father," she said. "I wish that Dave had another doctor within reach so that he could talk things out. I do what I can for him. You are peculiarly alone."

"That is all right."

"I do not believe so." Her eyes came back to meet his gravely. "There is a small Protestant mission within three days' journey. The Reverend Mr. Marvin has problems similar to yours."

She paused there and let her suggestion find words for itself in the mind of the man. Carmody stood quietly, and he was certain that she was friendly, but that she was not pledged to remain so. He could learn Latin from a book, and ritual, and he could move through the rôle of a priest; but he could not be letter-perfect in that rôle as long as he found it impossible to think as a priest thinks, as long as he was conscious of Anne Scott. The quiet understanding eyes of Beryl Sigman were a danger to him. Even now they were weighing him as it would not occur to any other person in the mission to weigh him.

He smiled grimly. "I believe that you are right," he said. "I appreciate the suggestion."

He walked with her to her door, and it was different than walking with Anne, but Beryl's voice was gentle.

"Good night, Father," she said. "I am sorry if I disturbed you."

Carmody walked back to his quarters, and in the morning he started across the mountains to the Protestant mission. It was a three-day journey, and within an hour of his departure, a patient Moslem started on the five-day journey to Mich Yang.

In the hospital, Dr. Sigman stood beside the bed of a Chinese porter who had just died. He frowned at the chart.

"It doesn't figure, Scotty," he said. "What happened to him?"

Anne Scott shook her head. "He seemed all right. I had just taken his pulse and temperature, as you see. He did not make a sound. He just twitched twice and he was gone."

Dave Sigman shrugged. He smiled, half-apologetically, as he revived the oldest medical joke. "Well, anyway," he said, "the operation was a success."

He walked away, down the aisle between the rows of beds. He had four major operations to perform, and the front office reported sixty-two patients on the clinic's list for the day. That was the way that he liked it—the leaven of work which kept a man sane. There was no time for wondering about the why of things: he had too much to do.

The pastor's study at the Protestant mission was a room of great dignity, finished in dark wood, with built-in bookcases lining the walls and a Turkestan

carpet on the floor. There was a huge dark walnut table piled with books and magazines, three comfortable chairs and a couch. The Reverend Thomas Marvin sat in one of the chairs, facing Carmody across the fireplace apron.

"I like to relax after dinner, Father," he said, "and it is seldom that I have the pleasure of chatting with a contemporary. I worked very closely with your people in Ningpo during the war. There were French and Belgian priests down there, and one Irish priest whom I shall never forget—"

He was launched on an anecdote, and Carmody studied him, as he had studied him during the afternoon and during dinner; still unsure of the man, fighting in his own mind with a half-formed resolve. If he told the Reverend Thomas Marvin the truth about himself, and if the telling proved a mistake, there would be no second chance; he would be in a worse position than if he stayed in the Catholic mission struggling alone with the web of problems that held him captive.

Those problems seemed neither urgent nor insoluble when he was away from them. They were more like the happenings of a dream world as viewed from the safe perspective of full consciousness. This cheerful clergyman accepted him as a priest, and there were no difficulties in that identity while he sat here chatting, or while he strolled around the grounds and inspected buildings. It was pleasant, in fact, to be a priest under these conditions, to be a missionary and the guest of a neighboring mission. It would not be difficult to convince himself that he was a priest. He did not have to invite trouble nor humble himself before this stranger. It was easier to wait, untroubled, until trouble sought him, hoping all the while to evade entirely the necessity for decision.

The soldier instinct in Carmody rose in protest. He had been trapped once because he rode into a situation without a plan, trusting to blind luck and his power to improvise on the spur of the moment. Luck and his own wits had deserted him on that first night in the mission, and he had become the captive of circumstance. He was riding into another situation, far grimmer than the last, and he was riding into it even as he sat here in this quiet room. Closing his eyes and trusting to luck would not do. Soldiers who trust to luck never have luck. He needed help from outside, and beyond himself, because his thinking traveled forever in a circle.

The vast hostile mountain miles that surrounded him were a reality. The humble Chinese who had trusted him with their most precious spiritual treasures were a reality. Anne Scott was a reality, and so was Beryl Sigman. Lastly there was Mich Yang and the Moslems who hovered forever around the mission. Those realities surrounded him, and even if he closed his eyes, they would still be there. If he hoped to control events, he dared not wait until events happened; he had to ride boldly in and cause them to happen. A lot depended upon the caliber of the man who sat here in the room with him.

The minister was chuckling at his own story. He was a friendly, affable man, deep in his fifties and only partially gray. The brackets around his lips were soft, and he had mild eyes. He was not impressive as he sat telling his story, nor did he seem particularly forceful. He was short and wiry and he wore a gray business suit. He reached the climax of his story and paused for effect.

"We stood there on the ruined wall," he said, "and Father Sweeney looked at the horde of refugees pouring through the gate. He spoke to me in a grudging tone of voice. 'You Protestants will have to take more of them than you are entitled to have,' he said, 'or a lot of them will go hungry this night, God forgive us all!'"

It was a very funny incident to the Reverend Marvin. He laughed heartily and Carmody laughed with him. "It isn't a Catholic custom to give you very much," he said.

"Indeed not."

The minister's mood changed swiftly. The tone in which he spoke the two curt words was unexpectedly sharp. He tightened his lips momentarily; then he shrugged. "I do not imagine that you were much impressed with our small establishment here, Father O'Shea. Our infirmary hardly compares with your hospital, and we have few facilities for orphans—"

Carmody had not been too impressed, but he refrained from saying so. It was indeed a small mission; but he could see it through the Reverend Thomas Marvin's eyes. The man had been twelve years in China. It had to be heartbreaking to give so much of one's life and to work with so little, to see the work and the opportunity loom large while resources remained small. The minister spread his hands apologetically; then, as though suddenly aware that he should not be apologetic, he set his lips firmly.

"However, we have made staunch converts, I assure you," he said crisply. "Our people are deeply loyal to us and to the faith that we have taught them."

He was the man of one denomination challenging politely the man of another to prove that, with better facilities, he would have accomplished more. It was the human touch, and Carmody smiled broadly. Not to reply in kind would embarrass the man who had spoken.

"Our Chinese do not go away, either, if we run out of rice," he said.

Thomas Marvin stiffened; then his smile, a trifle slow, but no less genuine, matched Carmody's. "Touché!" he said. "I deserved that, Father O'Shea. A bit competitive, wasn't I?"

"You were."

Carmody made his decision in that instant. He could trust a man with a sense of humor. "I have no right to be competitive with you, Mr. Marvin," he said.

He reached up and deliberately removed the Roman collar. The minister watched him with amazement in his eyes; with, perhaps, a premonition of what was to come.

"I do not understand," he said. "Just what do you mean, Father O'Shea?"

"I mean that I am not Father O'Shea."

The words seemed unnecessarily loud in the quiet room. The friendliness faded slowly from the eyes of the Reverend Thomas Marvin; the brackets around his lips tightened.

"Who are you, then?"

"I am a former pilot named James Carmody. I was badly hurt when I bailed out of a crippled airplane, and some of Mieh Yang's men found me. I worked for Mieh Yang, and it was not a happy situation. Father O'Shea was killed by a couple of stupid hillmen. It was a way out for me, and I took it."

"You mean that you assumed the identity of this priest and proceeded to this mission post? You let the people at the mission assume that you were a priest?"

The minister was no longer mild and affable. There was shock in his voice, challenge and stern disapproval in his face.

Carmody nodded. His motivations and his compulsions had been crystal-clear in his own mind until now, but it was difficult to explain them to this keen-eyed man across the room. He had again the cramped, trapped feeling of the confessional: with the difference that he was the penitent rather than the confessor. It was easier to be the penitent, because confession brought relief and an easing of responsibility; more difficult far to be the confessor, taking upon one's self the problems of another. The hostile eyes of the clergyman studied him.

"You had the arrogance and the effrontery to perform the functions of a priest, knowing that you had no right in the eyes of God or man?"

"I am afraid so."

"I do not like this, Carmody."

The Reverend Marvin rose and walked up and down the room. He had been relaxed and at ease, unprepared for what, to him, was a shocking revelation. He was an ordained minister of God brought suddenly face to face with the actuality of sacrilege, an offense that crossed the line separating different sects and that, by its very nature, offended all religion. He turned slowly back to Carmody. His outraged mind plucked a text from Jeremiah, and there was deep censure in his voice.

"Woe be unto the pastors that destroy and scatter the sheep of my pasture! saith the Lord. Ye have scattered my flock, and driven them away, and have not visited them; behold, I will visit upon you the evil of your doings, saith the Lord."

Carmody raised his head. "I have not been that kind of a pastor."

"No?" The voice was uncompromising. "What kind of a pastor have you been? What kind could you be?"

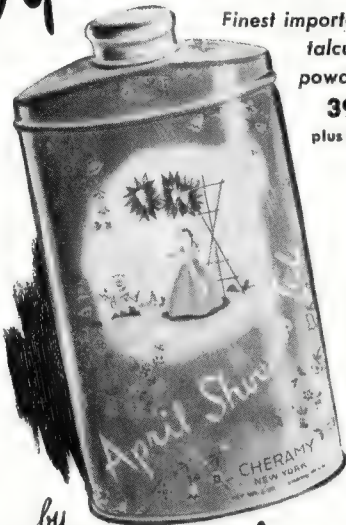
"I have tried to do what I thought that Father O'Shea would do. My only defense is that the work was there to be done, with no one to do it. What I did meant something to those people, and they, in turn, made me regret often that I was not actually a priest."

The grim lines that had formed in the minister's face relaxed slightly. He seated himself once more in his chair



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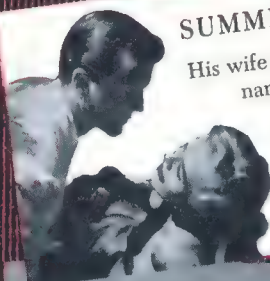
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and joined his hands, his fingers touching.

"Perhaps I have been harsh," he said. "I would like to hear about that. Precisely, what did you do?"

Carmody closed his eyes for a moment, and he could see again the mission as it looked that first night, the nurse in the lighted doorway. It had been cold and wet, and he had been close to exhaustion. There was a Chinese who was dying.

He started his narrative there, and he took it along, sparing none of the details save his feeling for Anne Scott. The quiet clergyman heard him through and sat for a good thirty seconds watching him when the narrative was ended.

"It is an incredible story, Carmody," he said, "and I do not know what to say to you." He compressed his lips. "Needless to say, I have little liking for Rome." He shook his head. "All that aside, a scandal which touches any Christian missionary effort in China hurts all missionary effort. You have projected a scandal."

This was a hard moment. Carmody felt spent. He had told his story, and there was no glimmer of light yet ahead of him, no glimpse of a way out.

"It is not a scandal yet," he said grimly. "That is why I am here. If I have done wrong personally, I'll answer for it. I do not want to destroy the faith of other people. I have had a chance to see what their faith means to them. Now, what can I do?"

The minister rose to his feet. "God knows, if we do not. Will you pray with me for a while in my church?"

"Gladly."

"Come along then, but put on your collar. I would prefer that my people did not know of this."

By his "people," the Reverend Thomas Marvin meant his wife, the young man who assisted him and who seemed to be a student rather than an ordained minister, the few Chinese on staff. It was a lonely life. Every bit of work done had to be done against odds and against hazards, with only a great intangible to make it all worth while; a belief in something beyond the testing of the senses. Carmody was sharply aware of it now as a way of life, and it was, he felt, a better way of life, and more rewarding in a manner that he could not define, than the life of a man who had led troops: yet he, himself, he believed, was better qualified to lead troops.

As though he sensed the line of thought, the minister raised his head. "The life in a small mission," he said, "is the nearest approach that man may make to the lives of the Apostles. A man must maintain spiritual vigilance. You have disturbed me greatly, Carmody."

"I know. And I'm sorry."

Carmody was conscious of his own height. The man who walked ahead of him was short, a potentially dynamic figure. Possibly there were times when the Reverend Marvin saw himself as Paul of Tarsus, and the comparison might not be too farfetched. From a genial, relaxed man, enjoying a mild anecdote, he had changed swiftly to a figure of wrath, spiritually outraged at

a sacrilege to another church than his own. Carmody's fate rested in the man's hands, and Carmody could not yet read it.

The mission was on a hillside, with the village below it, curving like a scimitar. The dusk was deep now, and a few lights glowed. There was the inevitable mission gate, a miniature of the pagoda gates at the entrances of villages. It had gold Chinese characters against a black background, characters that spelled out: CHUNG HUA CHI TU CHIAO HUI—THE CHURCH OF CHRIST IN CHINA. The church stood well back from the gate, a low structure of adobe brick painted white. Inside there were pews, with hymnals in the pew pockets, and a bare pulpit. Scrolls hung from the walls, inscribed with prayers.

There were no statues of the saints, no glowing sanctuary lamp, none of the atmosphere that Carmody associated with prayer. To him this church was bleak and cold, but the man who knelt beside him in the pew had his eyes raised to the Unseen and his lips moved. There was awe for Carmody in the thought that the man's prayers were for himself. He knelt there and prayer would not come to him, but the church seemed warmer, friendlier, with some gentle force moving in it. The Reverend Thomas Marvin rose, and Carmody walked with him out into the deepening night.

"Did any answer of your own come to you?" he said.

Carmody shook his head. "None." "I am sorry. The text that came to me as I prayed was Paul to the Galatians. You will recall it: 'Be not deceived. God is not mocked; for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap.'"

Carmody frowned, puzzled. The pattern of this man's belief was not clear to him. It would be a good thing, probably, to accept the Bible as the absolute Word of God, to know it thoroughly and, in time of trouble or difficulty, to empty one's mind until some chapter or verse entered unbidden. One would feel, he imagined, that God had spoken if one were trained to that faith. Man's difficulty would be, of course, with the interpretation of the word.

"Just how do you translate that text into a solution for my problem?" he said.

"Very simply." The Reverend Thomas Marvin walked slowly and spoke as he walked. "You must take the consequences of your actions, Carmody. You cannot escape them. You must put your own present wants aside and submit to authority until your spiritual account is squared. Since you have offended against the Catholic Church, you must inform the Catholic mission authorities that you, an impostor, are acting as a priest in their mission. That will not be easy. You must then wait until they act. They will act promptly, I assure you."

Carmody looked at him, astonished. There was no longer doubt or indecision, anger or indignation in Thomas Marvin. He had prayed and he had received his answer, and he spoke with a note of absolute authority. He no longer wondered with Carmody what should be done: he knew what should be done.

Carmody drew a deep breath. If he took that way, it meant the abandonment

of his plan to disappear with the floods of spring, and it meant returning to association with Dr. Sigman, with Beryl and with Anne. It meant confessions and masses and sick calls, playing out the string of Father Peter John O'Shea, with disgrace and humiliation at the end of it. The wrath of the Church would be great, and he would have to wait patiently until it descended upon him.

"You are right, of course," he said thoughtfully. "I must have known what the answer was, myself, but it was an answer that I did not want to accept. I wanted to do something on my own account." He smiled faintly. "Something spectacular."

"Problems are created spectacularly, but seldom solved that way. A man may dive into a pit with a flourish, but he gets out of it by crawling and by slow, painful climbing."

The two men stopped and faced each other. The Reverend Thomas Marvin's eyes were still measuring, neither friendly nor unfriendly. "I can give you the name of your bishop if you do not know it," he said, "and you may write your letter in my study. I will dispatch it for you. I have a courier service to Sinkiang. My mail is flown down the corridor. The Soviets have not interfered so far."

Carmody stiffened. The thought that passed through his mind was a brief thought, but the minister read it in his eyes. "It is possible, of course," he said, "that you, yourself, might reach Sinkiang, that you would not be molested by the Soviet police, and that you might be able to arrange for a flight to Lanchow."

Lanchow was the beginning of the way out. Carmody hesitated for a moment longer. "No," he said. "I would be letting too many people down."

The Reverend Thomas Marvin relaxed visibly. The harsh lines left his face and his eyes softened. "You can make any purpose of your own God's purpose if you submit willingly to consequences," he said. "I am glad that you came to me, Carmody, and I will pray for you."

Carmody shook hands with him, and he knew that Thomas Marvin was a sincere man who had taken the hard road himself before recommending it to others. The man had faith and the pride of faith, and the sympathy that he had taught himself for those who were less sure in belief than himself. He did not think of Carmody as a friend, but as a sinner set upon the path. That, too, was understandable. He was, in his own mind, an apostle, and apostles could afford only the friendship of other apostles; it was the way of authority.

Carmody smiled. "Thank you," he said. "I will not offer to pray for you, but some day, perhaps—"

He left his thought unvoiced. Together they walked toward the house, the study, and the letter that had to be written.

Beyond the hills, as he wrote, Mich Yang was on the march, moving at a leisurely pace and taking the homage of villages along the way, confident in the right of his might to do what he had determined to do.

... To be concluded next month

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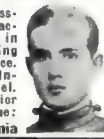
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**REDBOOK'S COMPLETE
SEPTEMBER 1950 NOVEL**

The Edge of Time

BY LOULA GRACE ERDMAN

ILLUSTRATED BY HERBERT SASLOW

A novel of courage — the indomitable courage of young Bethany, who asked only to share her man's dream of far horizons. They were two against a vast unconquered land. Stoically Bethany faced deprivation, separation and aching loneliness—knowing that independence is as necessary to a man as love to a woman



Prologue

The man rode ahead, not looking back, and the woman steered her course by him as a sailor would by a known star. Although she held the reins slack and easy,

she was not unmindful of them.

A cow followed the wagon. A rope, tied to the endgate, was around her neck. Two barrels were fixed to the wagon's side—one with water in it, the other empty. A rosebush in a box of dirt was on the side of the empty barrel. Packed in the wagon were many things—household goods, food, supplies.

The road the man and woman followed pointed like a slim forefinger, southward and westward. It had been years in the making. At first it was a single path, made by a solitary horseman. Others followed, obliterating his faint markings and, paradoxically enough, at the same time making them more permanent. By now, the road did not need a sign saying, "To Texas."

It was the artery through which the commerce of the land flowed—freighters, bringing in supplies; dusty herds, plodding northward to market. On both sides of it the great ranches sprawled out miles upon endless miles. The business that went over it was cattle business.

And now, where great herds were wont to go, a single cow walked; where groups of freighter wagons had left their deep cuts in the earth, a single wagon came.

This wagon was different from the others, with a difference that went beyond the household gear and the rosebush and the cow trailing behind. A woman was in it. And a plow.

Chapter 1

Bethany Fulton knew that she shouldn't be letting her mind jump around the way it was doing. A bride ought to listen to her wedding ceremony, weighing every

word of it, putting it away in her heart to remember and cherish all the days of her life.

Wade was standing beside her, stiff and straight, and maybe a little scared, although nobody would suspect it, for he was never the one to let on when he was frightened. A lock of black hair fell down across his forehead. He looked as if he wanted to push it back but wasn't sure whether it was the right thing to do, what with everything being so dignified and all. Bethany knew that look of his. It was as much a part of him as were his blue eyes, fixed steadily on the preacher now, or the way one eyebrow was raised a little higher than the other so that always he seemed intent and questioning, as if he didn't mean to take anybody's word for a thing until he'd had a look at it himself.

Maybe Wade wasn't listening any more than she was. Maybe he, too, had his mind on the wagon waiting outside. She could see it, easy as not, through the lace curtains of the parlor window. The April breezes were ruffling its canvas a little, making it look eager and impatient, like a horse stamping its foot to be off. The wagon that was going to take them to Texas.

It might as well have been the moon they were going to, for all she knew about it first-hand. She had only Wade's word for what it was like, and everyone said you couldn't trust a Cameron man when he got to talking about a new country. Everyone of the name had a feel for newness, a great wish to be out and seeing for himself what lay beyond the turn of the road.

"Dearly beloved, we are gathered together," Brother Metcalf intoned.

She could feel her heart beating hard and fast, knocking away against her breast so that she wondered if the force of it showed through the dove-gray silk of her wedding dress. It was such a sedate wedding dress. Mamma hadn't liked it at all—scarcely any bustle and a tight little basque with no trimming save white ruching at the neck and wrists. Cousin Rosemary, in a rose-and-blue striped foulard, made with a fashionably large bustle and elaborate trimmings of lace and satin ribbon, looked much more bridelike than the bride herself.

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"If there was time, we'd make you one like it," Mamma had said. "Oh, dear, I wish we didn't have to hurry so."

Bethany didn't mind. She liked the dress as it was. The color showed off the warm olive tones of her skin, her brown hair, her hazel eyes. It was exactly right for a new country where people had other things besides the latest styles to think of.

She could feel Rosemary's blue eyes fixed on her in a look that was a mixture of mockery, petulance and something that set Bethany to trembling. Wade must have sensed this, for he moved his shoulder a fraction closer in a pressure that was strong and sure.

"Will you take this man?" Brother Metcalf was asking. *Haven't you any shame at all? Rosemary had said. Any shame at all? Falling into his arms like a spineless idiot when everyone knows he's taking you just to spite me. Do you think you can hold him, getting him like that!*

Bethany tore her eyes away from her cousin.

"I will," she said, steadily.

"I pronounce you man and wife," Brother Metcalf said. Wade bent to kiss her.

"Bethany, you looked sweet," Mamma said.

Papa's eyes were wet when he kissed her, and Bethany might have cried a little then herself, only Papa blew his nose hard, and turned to Wade.

"Well, well, my boy," he said, "she's yours now, and don't think just because she's a quiet little thing she'll always do what you tell her to!"

Everyone laughed at that, which was what he meant them to do. After that, the good wishes came easy and natural—the preacher first and then Uncle Fred and Aunt Clara and, last of all, Rosemary.

"I'm sure I hope you'll be very happy," Aunt Clara said darkly, as if she hadn't the faintest notion she'd get her wish. Aunt Clara was given to dire predictions and always took it as a personal affront when things turned out better than she had feared.

Rosemary said something light and airy and kissed Bethany casually. She looked as if she were considering kissing Wade, too. He managed the moment nicely, taking her hand and saying, "Thank you, Rosemary," as if her good wishes to Bethany had included him, too.

The minister took the new Bible Papa handed him and filled out a decorated page labeled "Marriages." He wrote his name at the bottom and had Bethany and Wade sign. He asked Uncle Fred and Aunt Clara to sign as witnesses, blotted the page, and handed the book to Wade.

"Here," Mamma said, "just lay it on the center table and then we'll go into the dining-room for something to eat."

The table looked beautiful. There was a great bouquet of early jonquils, and the tiered wedding cake with candy decorations and a bride and groom at the top. The bride's dress was made from scraps of Bethany's. All the best china and silver were there, and the silver coffeepot that had been Great-grandmother's pride. Matilda, her black face alight with excitement, brought hot biscuits and chicken salad. Never fear the neighbors wouldn't have all the details, and soon. Bethany Fulton and Wade Cameron may have had a quiet wedding, but it was a proper Star Hill one, with flowers and cake and a reception, even if only a half-dozen people were there.

As Bethany cut the cake, Wade looked at her impatiently.

"Excuse me," she said. "I'm going upstairs to change."

"Want me to wait to dig up the rosebush until you come down, honey?" Papa asked.

She could not speak; she only nodded.

"I'll go with you," Mamma said.

They went out into the hall, and up the stairs with the big clock on the landing. Just ten o'clock. Fifteen minutes ago she had gone downstairs as Bethany Fulton. Now she was Bethany Cameron.

"Here," Mamma said. "Let me unhook your dress for you. I feel bad, sending you off with so few clothes. I'll try to have some stitched up for you, or at least send you some lengths."

"I have plenty," Bethany told her. "It isn't as if I were going to live in town."

Anything to keep back words like how far it was to Texas and how one short month ago none of them had dreamed she was going to need clothes in which to marry anyone, least of all Wade Cameron.

She put on her second-best dress, a brown challis with little yellow flowers. It would be nice to start out that first day. Of course, after that she'd wear those pretty calicos Miss Tillie had made. At least she had several of those—new and bright and mighty pretty. But this first day was different. Mamma packed the gray silk in a box, with tissue paper in the folds. Her mouth trembled as she worked, and her hands shook so that the dress went into the box all crooked. When she had tied the string, she took the girl in her arms.

"Bethany, honey," she whispered. "Bethany, my baby—" Bethany said, "You mustn't worry, Mamma. Everything is going to be all right."

(She was going to make things all right. She had just as good as asked Wade Cameron to marry her, and the words might stand between them all their lives. But she wasn't sorry. She was married to him now, and they were going to Texas. She'd have to see that things came out right.)

"We must go, now, Mamma," she said. "Wade is waiting."

"I know." Mrs. Fulton wiped her eyes. "I'm being silly. Wade's a good boy. I've known him all his life. But it is such a long way off."

Bethany turned to look at herself in the oval mirror atop the bureau, tied the strings of her second-best bonnet, gathered up mittens and purse.

"We'd better go now," she said gently.

As they all walked toward the wagon, Bethany thought anyone would know this was new, bound for adventure. It had a fresh, urgent look. Hitched to it were two strong horses, and Wade's saddle-horse, Rex, was tied beside. At the back trailed a little Jersey cow, her calf only recently weaned. This was part of Bethany's dowry. Also a rag carpet, feather bed, homemade quilts, bed linen, a set of dishes, fifty quarts of preserves and jelly, hams and bacon, seeds for a garden, and three books—Longfellow's poems, "Pilgrim's Progress" and the Bible in which the marriage record had been made. Wade's gift was a side saddle.

Bethany kissed everyone good-by.

"I'm ready," she said, turning to her husband.

He lifted her into the wagon, got in beside her.

"Don't worry," he said, looking down at the two anxious faces. "I'll be good to her."

The road ahead stretched wide and straight, and Bethany's heart ran forward and back, on a path whose beginning and end were strangely alike. For she had grown up on talk of Texas. She had grown up loving Wade Cameron.

She was born in 1866, the year a quarter of a million Texas cattle were driven up the trail to be shipped from Kansas City or St. Joseph. Star Hill, the little Missouri town of her birth, was only a few miles from the trail, so that the sight of these cattle—lean as greyhounds, covered with dust and bearing faint resemblance to fat staid cattle in Missouri pastures—was familiar to all. The men who drove them were a race apart, as well—lean and hard after months in the saddle, soft-spoken and straight-shooting. At their belts were six-shooter guns, so much a part of them you felt they slept with them in place. They sat their saddles easy-like, their hats pushed back on their heads with a nonchalance both arrogant and deprecating. And their talk, with its drawling intonations, was big talk of ranches, so that every man who listened yearned to be up and away to Texas.

A section of land, they said, wasn't any more than a pocket handkerchief someone had dropped accidental-like. You didn't have to buy land; you just turned your cattle out to graze, free, on grass so rich it was all a cow-critter needed to live on.

Small wonder that all the little boys of Star Hill played at being cowboys. Bethany could remember Wade, rope at his waist, red handkerchief around his neck, lassoing tree stumps and going out to pasture to practice on Bossy, the Jersey. She and Rosemary would follow him about. He mended their toys, made slippery-elm whistles, shot rabbits for doll furs.

The three houses sat close together. First Rosemary's, which was the nicest because Uncle Fred worked in the bank for Mr. Brad Bishop and Aunt Clara said they had to keep up appearances. Next was Bethany's, which was nice, too, because Papa had the store and could get things cheap. Then there was a vacant lot where the boys played and, after that, Wade's house. It was small because Mrs. Cameron was a widow who took in sewing. If Wade hadn't started helping out when he was young, she couldn't have managed at all.

Mostly they gathered at the Fulton house, because Mamma wasn't the particular housekeeper Aunt Clara was. They played dominoes together on the kitchen table in winter, eating apples and popcorn and pull-taffy. In the summer they played outside, the girls making doll houses by the maiden's-blush rosebush, its pinky-white petals falling over the playthings. Great-Grandmother Allen had brought the first cutting of this bush up from Virginia, long ago. Her daughters and granddaughters made ceremony of getting a cutting from it on their wedding day. Bethany never tired of the story.

Now, only a few cattle came up the trail to Kansas City and St. Joe, but the men of Star Hill remembered the old days, and talked of them.

"If I were a young man and family-free," Bethany's father said, "I'd go right to Texas."

"Oh, I don't know," Uncle Fred objected. "Sounds far-away to me. Don't even have railroads out there, they tell me."

"You just try going off to Texas, Fred Neale," Aunt Clara spluttered, "and see if you don't go alone."

"Didn't say I was going, Clara," Uncle Fred told her patiently. "I said I didn't think it sounded like a good idea."

Bethany and Rosemary sat on the porch, watching for the first star. Rosemary closed her eyes, said the familiar doggerel. "Know what I wished?" she asked.

"You daresn't tell," Bethany protested. "It won't come true if you do."

Rosemary said, "Things come true if you make them. I wished I'd marry Wade Cameron when I grow up."

Bethany was only eleven, but something hot and rebellious welled up in her heart. Rosemary would do it. She did everything she wanted to. Maybe that came of being all pink and white and blue and gold, like a valentine. When you looked like that, you got everything you wanted.

"I wished it, but I'm not so sure I really want him," Rosemary went on airily. At twelve, she talked smoothly, like a woman. "Mother says he'll never amount to anything. The Cameron men never do. Wade's father could have made all sorts of money here in Star Hill, but he was bound to go to Kansas. And then the bushwhackers killed him. His grandfather went to California to look for gold and no one ever heard of him again. And now here is Wade, saying he's going to Texas and be a cowboy."

"Maybe it's a good thing, being a cowboy is," Bethany said, loyally.

The girls were growing up now. Aunt Clara made them new dresses.

"I declare, Bethany," she said, snipping away at bastings. "You're that skinny. I can't make a dress fit you right."

"You're like your great-grandma," Mamma soothed her. "She looked like a puff of wind would blow her away, and she was really as strong as a horse. Good thing, too, for Missouri wasn't easy when she came up here from Virginia. You have her coloring, too."

Rosemary was always full of light chatter, dimpling prettily as she talked.

"Why don't you get a job at the bank, Wade?" she asked, one day. "Father says Mr. Bishop would take you in."

"I have a job," Wade told her. "Besides, I told you I wasn't going to work in the bank."

"But it's such a good job."

"Good job nothing—cooped up inside all day. Now you just quit talking about it. Hear me?"

For once, Rosemary was silenced. Later she told Bethany how foolish Wade was to turn down a job like that.

"There's Mr. Bishop, a widower with no children. Maybe he would have adopted Wade and left him some of that money. He's that rich!"

"Wade wouldn't want anyone to give him money."

"How do you know he wouldn't want it?" Rosemary asked. "Anyone would. Why, sometimes I even think it might be fun to marry Brad Bishop, just to get all that money."

"Marry Brad Bishop!" Bethany was incredulous. "Why, he's an old man—older than Papa."

"He's no such thing. He isn't much over thirty. He's awfully nice. I've been going down to the bank a lot lately, just to walk home with Father. Mr. Bishop always comes over and talks to me. He doesn't seem old at all."

Rosemary was completely aware of her beauty, acting as if she felt it gave her the right to take whatever she wanted. She appropriated all the boys in town, playing one against the other.

"I should think you'd be ashamed," Bethany would burst out. "Telling Wade you'd go to the church social with him and then going off with Don Emery."

"I didn't really tell Wade I'd go with him," Rosemary said lazily. "I just said I might. You wouldn't turn down a chance to ride Don's new saddle-horse if he asked you."

"But you did promise Wade. I heard you."

"Why, Bethany Fulton!" Rosemary opened her blue eyes wide. "I believe you're jealous. Either that, or you're stuck on Wade yourself."

"I just think a person ought to keep her word," Bethany said lamely, feeling herself go all hot with blushes.

Wade's mother died the summer he was twenty-one. Everyone wondered what he would do.

Rosemary was the first to know.

"Wade's going to Texas," she told Bethany.

"I thought he would," Bethany said.

Rosemary looked at her sharply before she spoke again. "He asked me to marry him—when he comes back." She made a song of the words, like a bird, carelessly. "Aren't you glad?"

"Yes," Bethany told her. "Are you going to?"

"He thinks I am," Rosemary laughed. "Maybe I will, sometime."

"I think—" Bethany began, and then paused, because just then Wade came along. He looked excited.

"Rosemary tell you I'm going to Texas?" he asked.

"Yes," Bethany said, steadily. "Yes, I think it's fine."

Word came back from him that he had reached Dodge City and got a job working with the freighters. He had bought himself a horse.

"You'd think he'd bought the universe," Rosemary said.

Then he quit freighting and went to work on a ranch, which was what he had really gone to Texas to do. Mail sent to Mobeetie would reach him—the ranch headquarters were only about thirty miles from there.

"Thirty miles to mail," Rosemary said. "Imagine that."

In Star Hill, things went on much the same. Bethany celebrated her nineteenth birthday, and Mr. Brad Bishop took to driving Rosemary and Uncle Fred home from the bank afternoons, for the girl continued to go down to meet her father. Star Hill did not fail to notice and comment.

"Do you think you should?" Bethany asked, uncertainly.

"Meet Father?" Rosemary opened her blue eyes wide.

"I don't see why not. I've done it since I was a little girl."

"What do you hear from Wade?" Bethany asked, changing the subject.

"Oh, nothing much. Something about filing on a claim and buying a few cattle and an extra horse up in the Strip, wherever that is. I wouldn't be a bit surprised," she added carelessly, "if he didn't come home before long."

Bethany was the first to see him when he rode up to Rosemary's gate on a bay horse. Rosemary had gone driving with Brad Bishop, so he came on over to Bethany's.

"Hello," he said.

"Hello, Wade. Come in."

"Everything looks just the same," he sighed, contentedly.

"You look good, too," he said. "Good enough to eat."

"Don't," she said. "Mamma has some cookies."

They laughed, and she led the way to the kitchen.

"How was Texas?" she asked.

"Oh, fine—how about some milk? I haven't had any to speak of since I left Missouri."

"I'd think you'd have all you wanted down there among all those cows."

"You couldn't get a teacupful from all those range cattle," Wade told her. "And even if there were gallons of it, the cowboys wouldn't milk. That's woman's work. Say, did you see my horse?"

"Yes."

"Isn't he a beauty? Name's Rex."

"He's awfully pretty. I noticed him when you rode up."

"Have any idea where Rosemary is?" he asked.

"No, but I imagine she'll be back before long."

"Come on out and see Rex," he suggested, and just as they reached the horse, Rosemary and Brad drove up.

"Why, Wade Cameron!" she cried. "Whenever did you get back?"

"How was Texas?" Brad asked.

"Fine, sir," Wade told him, never taking his eyes off Rosemary.

"I'll see you later," Brad said. "Come down to the bank sometime, Wade, and we'll have a visit."

"Well," Rosemary said lightly, but still with a nervous undertone in her voice, "you did surprise me, Wade. Now come on in the house and tell me all about Texas."

In the days that followed, Texas was practically all any of them heard about. Wade was full of it. And when he talked, Bethany was reminded of the pictures of men in her history book—tall men and lean, with rifles on their shoulders, walking beside covered wagons headed west.

"Mr. Bishop says ranchers are as rich as anything," Rosemary said. "I bet you'll be rich in no time with that ranch you filed on."

"I didn't file on a ranch," Wade told her. "I'm just a homesteader. Except," he added thoughtfully, "out there they call us nesters."

"I've heard about homesteaders," Aunt Clara said. "Or nesters. Whatever you call them, it's all the same. They live in sod shanties, and grasshoppers eat their crops. Then the missionary society or their families send them barrels. I've helped pack a many a one."

"I filed on a section," Wade said. It was hard never to see Rosemary alone. What he told her must always be said before others—she always seemed to manage to have others around when he came.

"A section is a good bit of land," Uncle Fred said, impressed. "Guess you sank all your mother's house-money in the deal."

"No, sir, I didn't. Paid two dollars an acre—part down, and thirty years to pay the balance. I earned most of the money out there."

"Two dollars an acre for good land!" Papa broke in. "That sounds pretty fine. The way I see it, Texas now is just about like Missouri was when our folks came here from Virginia. A new country. Man's country. You don't know yet what you can do with it."

"You make me tired," Aunt Clara snapped. "You're just like all the men. Never was a man yet who didn't fancy himself running right alongside Daniel Boone and maybe even a step or two ahead of him. What I've always wanted to look at is Mrs. Daniel Boone's diary. Cooking over fireplaces and dodging Indians and living on squirrels and lye hominy. No new country for mine, thank you."

"Oh, goodness, Mother," Rosemary broke in lightly. "Texas isn't like that. It's 1885, and things are different now."

Wade took out a piece of paper, drew a rough sketch of the State of Texas. On the part that stuck up like a chimney on a house, he drew an X.

"A lot of the State is settled, and pretty much like Missouri, but I'm up in what they call the Panhandle, where the X is. That's new country—still lots of land there, almost for the taking."

"And nobody there except the Indians," Aunt Clara said. "They'll get your scalps before you have a chance to get the land."

"There aren't many people there yet," Wade admitted, "but the Indians don't bother anybody. I like the country the way it is. It will fill up, in time."

He looked like the men in the history books again, and Bethany yearned over him, thinking she could not bear that he should lose his dream.

"I think it sounds lovely," she said staunchly.

He turned to regard her quietly, as if, for the first time since he came back, he was really seeing her.

"It is," he told her.

He told them more about his claim. In Texas, you got your land from the State, and not from the national government. Texas kept her own public lands when she came into the Union. Every other section was school land. It was the school land they were selling, so you couldn't get two sections right together. Texas had the prettiest State capitol you ever saw by trading Panhandle land to the company that built it.

"They have a way of getting things done down there," Wade said.

"What'd you do with your stock while you're gone?" Uncle Fred asked.

"The cattle are running with the other herds—everybody's sort of run together. A friend of mine by the name of Newsome is looking after my other horse. Newsome filed on a section, too. Just one between his and mine. Oh, I left things in pretty good shape, but I have to be getting back before long. Want to plant a crop."

"How do you get to that claim of yours?" Rosemary asked.

"You can take the train to Dodge City and go from there by stage to Mobeetie. My claim is about sixty miles from there, and we"—he used the word unconsciously, so sure he was—"could get a wagon and go over from there. But I figure it would be better to go by wagon from here, taking as much as we could carry with us. Things are awfully high in Dodge City, and Mobeetie, too."

"A covered wagon—like movers—" Rosemary shuddered.

"It isn't bad. You camp along the way and—well, I think you'd like it. I made the trip with the freighters, and there was something sort of—well, sort of free about it."

It was the age-old cry of the pioneer man, trying to tell his woman about a new country. So Daniel Boone might have talked to his wife, explaining his dislike for the smoke from his neighbors' chimneys; so Leif Ericsson; so Abraham, urging Sarah on to Canaan. But the chances were they didn't have to present their cases in front of witnesses.

"Well—" Rosemary was not entirely convinced. "Oh, my goodness," she cried, as a knock came at the door, "I wonder who that can be!"

It was Brad Bishop.

"Hello, Rosemary," he said. "Hello, Wade." He turned back to the girl. "What's this I hear about your going off to Texas? Wade was down talking to me this morning. You—in a little sod shanty on the plains!"

"To Texas?" Rosemary drawled. "Whatever gave you that idea!" Her words were an affirmation, not a denial.

"I've got to be going," Wade said, absently. It was plain he saw nothing of significance in Brad's visit. "Have some things to see about. I'll be back later."

Rosemary was gone, when he did come. Again he called at Bethany's.

"Mind if I wait here for Rosemary?" he asked. "She's out."

So they sat on the porch and talked of Texas. He was busy checking supplies. Got everything he needed except a plow. He'd have to try to get one from some homesteader up the trail. It took a special kind to break up prairie sod.

"Couldn't you get it in Texas?" Bethany asked.

"No," he said, adding thoughtfully, "they don't like that word out there."

Just at that moment, Brad drove up with Rosemary. The way he helped her out of the buggy told all you needed to know about how things were between them. Then he drove off, without a word, and Rosemary came up the walk.

"I guess I might as well tell you," she said. "I'm going to marry him."

No one answered, and catching up her skirt, she turned and ran across the yard.

Wade watched her go. The way he looked frightened Bethany. She tugged at his hand.

"I'm sorry," she said, but she wasn't. Joy swept through her like wind through a forest, and then a sort of inner light flooded her face and her eyes shone. "She's my own cousin, Wade, and I shouldn't say this, but I think she's done a terrible thing. Why, I think it would be the most wonderful thing in the world—" She hesitated; then, facing him clear and honest, finished, "It would be the most wonderful thing in the world to go to Texas with you."

Well, she was going to Texas with him. The road behind had closed in now so that not even a small part of Star Hill was left. This wagon was her world, suspended between past and present, each revolution of its wheels taking her farther away from all she had ever known.

Wade held the lines loosely, facing straight ahead. "Comfortable?" he asked.

"Yes," she told him, stiffly.

How did a man and woman talk together just after they were married? Oughtn't he do something besides just watch the road ahead? Maybe she ought to say something, easy and light, so he wouldn't know she was embarrassed and scared.

"Your ma was right brave about letting you go," he said, breaking the silence at last.

"She'll miss me." Bethany spoke a little thickly. She hoped she wasn't going to cry.

Wade cleared his throat. "If you like," he said, "we can stay at the hotel at Elvon tonight instead of camping out."

"No," she said, primly. "Let's just camp. We better get used to it."

Wade turned to face her. He grinned. "Good Lord, Bethany," he said. "Relax. If you sit that stiff your back will be broken before we even get started." He shifted the lines to one hand, put his arm around her.

Funny thing—she hadn't cried at all leaving home, but now the tears poured down her cheeks.

Wade's arm tightened. He kissed her, not like after the wedding ceremony, but hard and quick, bending her head back until the little bonnet fell off, dropping into the wagon bed.

"Bethany, honey—" he whispered. "Don't cry, sugar. You know I'll be good to you. Darling—"

It was, as Bethany said, the first of many campings. Day by day the ashes of their campfires pushed forward, each one a little ahead of the one the night before.

It was as if the line of them was a thread that bound them to Missouri but, at the same time, went steadily on toward their destination.

Their world was this wagon, moving as they moved. The horses set their feet down rhythmically, drawing after them the weight of life itself—food, clothing, shelter. Rex walked beside the team, not much liking the arrangement, but submitting to it.

"Wouldn't it be better to tie him behind?" Bethany asked. "He doesn't seem too happy where he is."

"He'd like it less in the back," Wade said. He raised his voice. "I wouldn't ask you to drag along behind the wagon with a cow, would I, Rex, old boy?"

The horse shook his head, as if he understood. They were very close, these two. Almost it was as if they had a private language of their own.

The country was beautiful now, green with the fresh bright innocence of a new-born spring. Dogwood hung white on roadside bushes and crabapple thickets were full of tight-budded promise. On every fence post meadow larks sat, their song a silvery sweetness in the air.

Bethany and Wade slept in the wagon. Unless it rained, they kept the canvas flap up, and through that opening they could look at a moon-washed or star-studded sky.

"This is to scare off coyotes," he told her easily when she saw the gun hanging at his side. "I'm going to teach you to use it and the rifle."

Bethany soon learned the pattern of it all. They planned each day's journey, stopping if they came earlier to a place they liked. Wade built the campfire while Bethany got out skillet, coffeepot and supplies. He cared for the stock while she cooked.

"Careful," he warned. "It's dangerous for a woman around a campfire."

"The idea," she said. "What did you bring me along for, anyway?"

"To cook, I reckon," he said, grinning.

At first she burned her hands and scorched her skin. Once the fire blazed up unexpectedly, singeing her hair and lashes.

Wade rushed to her. "You've got to be careful," he told her roughly. "You could have burned yourself."

(No shame, Rosemary had said. No shame at all! Don't you know he'll never love you?)

"I wasn't watching," she answered, shakily, moved by his fright.

"You've got to watch out," he repeated. "I can't have anything happening to you. Promised your ma I'd take care of you, didn't I?"

On Sundays they rested, and Wade would ride Rex around the camp. It was all so strange, as if time were out of joint. Wade marked off each day on the calendar, and when he drew a cross to mark that first Sunday, she felt all wrong inside. Sunday ought to be more than an X on a calendar.

"Don't you think we ought to read the Bible?" she asked.

He took it from her. "Sure," he said, a little self-conscious. Then he cleared his throat, turned some pages.

"The Lord is my shepherd," he began. When he finished the psalm, he asked, "Suppose we ought to sing something?"

"Yes," Bethany said. "I'm not sure I can get it pitched right, though."

"Wait a minute—I'll get my harmonica."

Chapter 2



ILLUSTRATED BY HERBERT SASLOW

It was beautiful, like the harps of old, she thought. Maybe even like the one the boy David played. She began to sing:

"On Jordan's stormy banks I stand.
I'm bound for the promised land.
O, who will come and go with me?
For I'm bound for the promised land."

Now they lived in a world all their own, and it was as if time stood still and let them pass.

Wade tried to prepare her for what was coming. They would have to live on the claim three years, he said, and make some improvements. That was part of the agreement. There would be interest to pay on the money he owed. He meant to plant a crop.

There were scarcely any wells in the Panhandle he explained—you had to go too deep to get water. Mostly what they had came from springs and creeks and lakes and rivers. He was lucky only one section stood between him and water. Newsome—the one that was looking after his other horse—had a section with a spring on it.

"Is Newsome a nester, too?" Bethany asked.

"No—he works for the boss of Triple T. When they passed the homesteading law down at Austin, the boss had Newsome grab off the section with the spring on it. He got his cowboys to file on most of the good sections around—the ones with water. He'll buy from them after a while. Most of the ranchers did that."

"Why didn't they file on it themselves?" Bethany asked.

"Because the law says you can't file on more than one section of arable or seven of grazing land. And one section of land—even seven sections—well, a rancher wouldn't think that was much more than a joke. Except one with water on it. I've got my eye on Newsome's. He won't be staying long. His wife doesn't like the country."

He told her about the dugout, too.

"It isn't like a soddie," he said. "It's really what you call a half-dugout, back into a rise of the land with boards above ground and sod for a roof. It's cooler in summer, warmer in winter, than a real house, and it has real glass windows."

Bethany didn't see anything so wonderful about that. All houses had real glass windows, but she didn't tell him that.

"Usually it's hard to get freighters to bring in stuff like glass and things they figure we could do without. But Hud Johnson—he's the freighter I worked with—did it for me. Told me I was crazy for wanting glass when I could make out with paper."

"That's fine," Bethany said. "I have some pretty curtains in my box."

"It's good you have, because it isn't easy to buy things like that. You've got to sort of figure out a place, and get ready for it. Can't go off somewhere and expect the things you need to fall in your lap. That's why I want to pick up that plow."

He came upon his plow. Yes, the man was willing to sell, but where did they aim to take it?

"To the Texas Panhandle."

"I reckon it will be the first one out there."

"There aren't many, and that's a fact."

"Well, I wish you luck, but from all I hear, that's not farming country."

"Nobody's tried it yet, to speak of."

Wade tied the plow under the wagon, and they drove on. True to his promise, he taught Bethany to shoot.

"Now you just hold that shotgun tight against your shoulder, or it will kick like the devil," he told her.

At night he got out the harmonica and played, sitting on the ground beside the campfire, Bethany beside him. Sometimes they camped with other people, which was an occasion for great visiting. The men would look for antelope and deer. The women stayed behind to wash and to visit. They were starved for companionship. Bethany got so she could tell, just by looking at people, which direction a wagon was going. The ones headed west were full of hopes and plans. Those going east were like ashes of dead campfires.

"If you are a-plannin' to go to Nebraska," a man said, "you jest as well to turn around and hit back fur home. They ain't nothin' but drought and grasshoppers out there. I sez to the ol' woman, 'We'll jest go back to yore folks in Arkansas and leave Nebraska to the 'hoppers, seein' as how they want it so bad.'"

"I'm going to Texas," Wade told him.

"The way I hear it, Texas ain't no better. Besides, that's ranch country and you won't be in nowise welcome."

"It's been opened for homesteading," Wade said. "Nobody said anything when I filed on my section."

"Where'd you file?" another man asked.

"In the Panhandle—on beyond Wolf Creek."

"Good God, man—I guess nobody needed to say anything. You might as well try to build a house with one match-stick as to make a living on one section out there."

"Mine's not like that," Wade said. "Mine's good land."

"Well, go ahead and try. Some men won't ever learn a fire is hot until he burns his fingers."

In the westbound wagons, many of the women were young. Some had little children. Others, in the vernacular of the time, were just beginning "to show." They seemed unafraid. If they weren't, they did not say so, being young and in love with their husbands and full of dreams. What they minded most was going so far from doctors. In their hearts they were already praying for the greatest boon a pioneer woman can ask for—"an easy time and a well baby."

"Oh, you'll git along all right," the woman headed home from Nebraska told them. "Only trouble is, you jest as well to plan on givin' up a tooth for every young'un. Sometimes I git to wonderin' if they are worth it," she added, grinning to show snaggle-tooth gums.

They drove on, seeing fewer people. They crossed the Arkansas and the Cimarron. The country began to change. With the thinning-out trees, the settlements grew more scarce. In a curious sort of way, the trees seemed to nourish the people.

Wood for campfires had been no problem, but now they came to a place where there were no trees, roots, bushes. Wade came carrying a small box of flat whitish disks one evening.

"What have you got there?" Bethany asked, idly. Then, suddenly, she knew.

"Cow chips," he told her. "I hoped we'd find some around this water hole."

"They're—they're filthy!" she cried.

He handed a disk to her.

"Take it in your hand," he said, so quietly she was afraid to disobey.

It was still warm from the sun, and it felt like soft dead wood found by old tree stumps back home.

"Now drop it," he said, "and look at your hands."

They were brown and travel-stained, but not dirty.

"Remember how they used to look after you handled a piece of coal?" he asked.

"Cow chips are nothing more than dried grass," he went on, "sort of second-hand. Just like coal used to be trees, they say. Nature's way of using leftovers. This is a sight faster and cleaner."

Bethany watched the fire blaze up, clear and pure. Without another word she started supper.

They drove on. They crossed the Canadian. They came to Camp Supply. Wade said Rex needed to be ridden more.

"You ride him part of every day and I'll drive the team," Bethany suggested.

Wade was riding ahead the day they came to Dodge City Road, the day they met Hud Johnson and the freighters.

"I'm right pleased to meet you, ma'am," Hud said.

"Heard ol' Wade, the son-of-a-gun, talk about you, but I reckon you can't believe what a man in love says about his girl. Leastways, I never would have known you, ma'am, from the things he told me."

"It's good to have you, ma'am," Hud Johnson went on. "We don't have near enough women in this country, and that's a fact. Anytime you want any little thing brought down from Dodge City, you just have ol' Wade send me word."

Bethany said, "Oh, thank you. That's good of you."

"No trouble at all," he said. And went back to his wagon. He cracked his whip over the mules' backs, and the long line of wagons moved off. Their going made a jagged hole in the landscape.

They stopped at Sloan's Crossing. Sloan and his wife had the store and the post office and a sort of inn. Sloan's wife made Bethany stay there.

"You'll sleep in a real bed, my dear," she said. "You ain't seen one since you left home, I venture."

Wade decided they'd stay for a few days, getting the wagon in shape, resting the horses. It was rough country ahead and would be a steady uphill pull. Bethany wanted to get some washing done. She wanted to sleep in that real bed.

"Hope you don't meet Poco and Indian Charlie down the way," Sloan said.

"They on the loose again?" Wade asked.

"Sure are—robbed the mail stage day or two ago."

Poco was a little man; he got his name from a Spanish word meaning little. The Indian had his right ear notched.

"Like a steer that's been worked," Sloan said. "Nobody knows for sure how he got it, but it's sure given him a hate against the world. Team him up with Poco—well—"

"Now don't you be telling such things in front of Miz Cameron," Sloan's wife protested, but Sloan was not to be sidetracked. Even with people coming through for mail and supplies and stuff, he still didn't get a proper chance to talk.

"That Poco," he said, "he hates being little. Reckon he has to act cussed, just to prove he's a man. They say somewhere back he must have good stuff in him—can act as manly as if he was in a parlor—bow polite and ask permission to put a bullet through your heart. Would, too, if he needed something you had—your horse or your stake or your woman."

"Now, Sloan," Sloan's wife put in, looking sidewise at Bethany, "you know he won't bother women. Good women, leastwise. That's one thing about this country," she said, turning to Bethany, "we got so few women out here, they're a sort of curiosity. Hardly ever you come across a man bad enough to bother a woman. A good woman," she repeated, smoothing down her skirt with conscious virtue.

"They're probably in Dodge City by now," Wade said. "We got no cause to worry."

"Do you suppose those two have really gone to Dodge City?" Bethany asked next day, after they'd started.

"Now, Bethany," Wade said impatiently, "you stop worrying. They wouldn't fool with little stuff like we got. They pick stagecoaches and mail hacks and things like that." He grinned, sorry for his impatience, but unwilling to say so. "Sometimes it's pretty good not to have much of anything," he told her. "That way, you don't have to be worried about robbers."

That evening Wade took the stock to the water-hole while she cooked supper. She had just bent over to turn a flapjack when she heard men's voices.

"Good evening, friend," someone said.

"Good evening," Wade answered.

Something in his voice caught her instant attention.

"Nice horse you got there," the stranger went on. "Now me, I'm not so lucky. My horse is limping. My pardner's isn't so good, either. You willing to let us have a couple of yours?"

"No!" said Wade curtly.

Bethany never knew how she moved so fast—to see Wade facing two men on horseback.

One was scarcely more than a boy, from the size of him. A silk handkerchief was knotted around his neck, a wide white hat pushed back on his head. He sat his horse with easy grace, holding the reins with one gloved hand. The other man was huge and dark and unkempt. Bethany's eyes flew to him.

"Oh, my God—" she whispered.

The right ear lobe was notched.

Poco and Half-breed Charlie! Wade had said she needn't worry, but here they were. "He'll ask permission to put a bullet through your heart," Sloan had said.

Wade stood perfectly still. He didn't have a gun, thank God; surely they were not so low as to shoot an unarmed man.

"We need two horses mighty bad," the small one said. "Of course, we'd feel a lot better about it if you'd give them to us."

Yes, he'd shoot a man, if that man had what he wanted. He might shoot anyway, just for the sport of it.

What was it they had said, back at Sloan's Crossing?

"Funny thing, he won't bother a woman. A good woman, that is—"

She rolled down her sleeves, smoothed her hair, and left the protection of the wagon. Ignoring Wade's desperate signal to her to go back, she walked straight toward him. Her knees were like jelly; blood surged in her ears. But she managed to smile. The look on Wade's face made them turn.

The small one regarded her carefully. He wasn't a bit fooled by her smile; he saw the terror that underlay it.

"Good evening, ma'am," he said, taking off his hat.

Now that she saw his face, she knew he wasn't a boy. He was a man, and he hated being boy-sized. It was like Mrs. Sloan had said—he was always having to prove himself. He had to do things different, so stories would be told about him that would make people forget how small he was. He was dangerous, this man. He had to be.

"Good evening," she said, walking past him, to stand in front of Wade. The small one followed her with his eyes. He knew she stood so that a bullet sent to Wade's heart would strike her first.

"Supper is ready," she said. "Would you like to ask your friends to stay and eat with us, Wade?"

They all stood frozen in the moment, like leaves in an ice-bound brook. The little man finally broke the silence.

"Well, ma'am," he said, "that is very kind of you, but I don't know that we can. We're—in a hurry. So I guess we'd better be getting along, but thank you for asking us. On second thought, I don't believe we need the horses."

Lifting his hat, he rode off, the half-breed at his side.

Bethany felt strength draining from her. She reached out blindly toward Wade.

He took her up in his arms, holding her tight.

"Bethany, honey," he said, "you shouldn't have done it. A little bit of a thing like you, walking up to Poco and Charlie. You knew who they were, too."

"That's why I came," she whispered.

She stroked his face, to feel the solid reality of him, to know he wasn't lying on the ground with a bullet in him.

"I was so scared," she repeated with a child's insistence. He nuzzled his chin against her head. "Don't you feel bad about that, honey," he said. "I reckon I might as well tell you I was scared myself. Scared as hell."

They left the main trail now, Wade driving and making Bethany take things easy. They came to Wolf Creek, where in the ragged, broken land grew a little reddish-purple flower—acres and acres of it.

"Buffalo clover," Wade explained.

"How beautiful!" Bethany cried, seeing bushes with sword-like leaves and cup-shaped blossoms.

"That's bear grass. The Mexicans call it Candle of the Lord."

"Candle of the Lord," Bethany mused. "I like that."

"We're in Texas now," Wade said, excitement in his voice. "This is the Lazy Q; it's good country for cows here. They can find shelter in the breaks. It's good to be close to the breaks. Especially if you get north of them. Then the cattle can drift south when a storm comes and find shelter. There's wood in the breaks. And water."

They drove on, coming, at last, to the plains.

The first thing Bethany saw was nothing. Nothing at all. She pitched her mind in nothingness, found herself drowning in it as a swimmer drowns in water too deep for him.

Here was more sky than she had ever seen before. That was all there was—no houses, no trees, no roads. She shrank back from it, as one draws back from sudden bright light.

"Aren't there any trees?" she asked.

"Not on the high plains. Too dry for them. They grow down in the breaks. Just look at the grass."

She looked at it. Green and lush, it came to the horses' knees. The wind ruffled its surface as it would the bright face of water. Grass and sky and levelness and a great aching loneliness in which there was no sense of direction, no landmarks to tie to. Bethany remembered her father's words: "They say the grass out there is all that a cow needs to live on."

"We leave the main trail here," Wade told her. Joy and purpose were running full and free through his body. "A couple more days and we'll be there."

They were blazing their own trail now. Wade would guide himself by things she didn't even see—a swell in the land, a clump of grass higher than the rest.

Two days later, about noon, they came to the dugout. Wade, riding ahead, stopped, and Bethany brought the creaking wagon to a halt. He got off and came to her, lifted her down, set her feet on the ground.

"Well, honey," he said. "This is it. This is home."

The dugout sat against a slight rise in the land, reinforced and protected. It crouched back against this elevation, as if shrinking from the terrifying vastness surrounding it.

"It's like a cellar," Bethany thought, "or a cave."

Nothing Wade had told her had prepared her for these unpainted boards rising above prairie grass. On top of them was more grass—prairie sod making the roof. Close by was a small shed and an enclosure surrounded by posts. That must be the corral he had talked about. How pitiful it seemed, as if questioning the right to be here.

She'd plant trees, Bethany thought; somewhere in the breaks he talked about. Wade would have to find her some trees.

"Well," he was saying. "it's just like I left it."

"It looks fine," she said.

Wade opened the door, lifting a rough homemade catch.

"We don't lock doors out here," he said. "Might somebody come along that needed a meal bad."

He stood back to let her go in.

She saw a single room and a crude object that would hold her feather bed and homemade quilts. She saw a stove, a rough table and a few chairs—one rocker, low and shiny—a woman's rocker. Save for these the room was bare.

Almost timidly Wade said, "See—I told you there were glass windows."

One thing the trip had done for her—she knew what windowpanes meant in this country. They had to be freighted in, and that cost money. You planned a long time ahead, and you paid not for the windows alone but endless miles over which they must travel and the space they occupied in the wagon that might better be taken by food or other vital things.

She said, "They are lovely, Wade."

No need to tell him she had not thought to find the house so small and primitive. No need to say that even though he had told her how things were, she still had not realized it meant living like animals in a burrow—dirt for a floor and dirt for a roof and dirt for walls. No need to let him know she was remembering he had built this home for Rosemary.

The bed was meant for Rosemary's dowry things. Now this house, such as it was, was Bethany's.

"Why, Wade," she said, "it's wonderful—"

In Missouri she had taken so much for granted—clotheslines in place, held steady by stout poles, and chicken houses made tight against the weather. Outbuildings and sheds and storerooms. Surely there must have been a time these things did not exist.

Here the dirt floor was hard and smooth beneath her feet. They'd have to get the carpet in and lay it, though how one fastened a carpet to a dirt floor, she was not prepared to say. There was no cupboard for the new dishes, no shelves. To be sure, a ledge ran all around the room, up where the boards met the dirt wall of the dugout. She could set a lot of things there. At home, shelves were always magically there, the only problem being what to put on them—the clock or the blue willow dishes or the coffee mill. Nails, too, were always where they were needed—close to the stove for pot-lifters and behind the door for aprons. In the dugout there wasn't a nail anywhere.

She took off her bonnet, rolled up her sleeves.

"It looks nice, Wade," she began, "but it's going to look a lot nicer when we get the things in."

"Sure," he said. "I'll put the horses in the corral. Anything special you want brought in first?"

"The calendar," she told him.

At home, the kitchen calendar was always covered with cryptic notes, diaries of domesticity. "Paid Noah fifty cents." "Planted sweet peas." "Set the speckled hen." These were the small but pertinent notations of daily life, set down in her mother's neat hand. To Bethany, they were the symbol of the woman who ruled the home. This was the first command she would give.

"Wade—I wish you'd get the hammer and drive a nail for me."

He looked doubtful. "It won't stay," he said. "These lower walls are dirt."

"It can go above the dirt, into the wood."

"That will be too high for you to reach."

"I won't want to reach it often, and when I do, I'll stand on a chair."

"Now, before we move things in?"

"Yes—now."

He found nails in a box in the wagon, and drove one in the spot she indicated. And when that was done, she got the calendar—the one on which Wade had marked the days of the journey. With a bit of pencil she encircled the date, a Thursday in mid-May.

"Moved in," she wrote, in her round, childish hand.

"Now, hang it up," she said.

Wade hung the calendar. At the top was the legend, W. R. FULTON, GENERAL MERCHANDISE, STAR HILL, MISSOURI.

"That the way you want it?" he asked, stiffly.

Bethany looked at him quickly, guessing what was wrong. Even though you had lived with a man only six weeks, you got so you understood what lay behind his words. As well as, or maybe better than, your own thoughts. He was scared. He was seeing the dugout as she might see it; for the first time he was realizing it wasn't as fine as he had thought it was.

"Yes," she said, slipping her arms around his neck. Her kiss was warm and sweet and generous. "I think it's all just beautiful."

"Gosh," he said, holding her tight. "I'm glad you like it. There for a minute, you had me worried."

They began to move things into the dugout. Bethany thought it was well there were so few. Some would have to be left in the wagon until Wade had connived shelves. They put the carpet on the dirt floor, a layer of prairie grass beneath it. Wade pegged it down at the edges. He brought in the little center table, and she hung the curtains and put the straw tick and feather bed and sheets and quilts on the bed in the corner.

"I'll get supper now," she said. "Tomorrow we can move in the rest of the things. And plant the rosebush."

Quiet settled over the land. Darkness did not seem so much to fall as it did to rise from a hushed earth to the bright face of the sky, which at first strained away—resisting, retreating. Finally the night won—slowly, inexorably, until at last all of earth and sky were cradled in its arms.

Bethany lay at Wade's side, awake, listening as if she strained to hear nothing or went looking for nothing to hear. During the long journey she had come to think that perhaps

the night sounds of a country were the true essence of it. In Missouri, these were friendly breezes caressing thick-leaved trees and drowsy night birds chirping notes of tenderness; horses stamping companionably in barns and chickens making subdued noises when something disturbed their sleep; neighbors' dogs, their barking emphasizing their friendly nearness, calling to other dogs across the moonlit fields. All these were signs of compactness and an established way of life.

Now she could hear the wind moving across the prairie—a slithering, vacant sound, as if it were seeking vainly for something substantial to pit itself against, as if it were tired of the cloying acquiescence of grass as a man would tire of a woman whose conquest he found too easy.

The most different sound of all was the sound of the stillness itself. It was not mere absence of noise. It had a positive quality, a character of its own, and a substance. She knew it for an adversary—powerful, constant, waiting—but not necessarily unfriendly. More, it seemed to be taking her measure while reserving judgment.

And then a real sound broke the stillness—shivering, tattered fragments of a great and tragic sadness filling the air, like loneliness mourning for all things lost beyond hope of recovery. It shattered into a kind of eerie laughter and died, only to be taken up again and again.

And she knew it for what it was—the voice of the coyote, the essence of this brooding land. She crept closer to Wade.

The next morning they planted the rosebush. Wade took it from its box of dirt. The leaves had long since dried up and fallen, so that it looked like nothing more than dried sticks. But the soil still clung stubbornly to its roots—Missouri soil. And when they looked closely, there was a living cast of green to them on the stems.

"It's still alive," Wade told Bethany, answering the urgent question in her mind. "That's not saying it will live, but it's alive now. Where do you want it planted?"

She said, "Right here—right by the door."

The words were slow on her tongue, and the taste of salt was in her mouth. She remembered the doorway it had come from and the two who had stood there, watching her drive off to Texas. She felt as she used to feel when she was a little girl away from home to spend the night. Things were all right until dark came with a sharp stab of homesickness, so it was all she could do to keep from running back to the sweet comfort of home—Mamma and Papa and her own room, and all the dear familiar things.

She stooped to take a bit of dirt from the bush and rub it gently between her fingers. She and the rose were in Texas now, but Missouri had nourished them in the beginning. Only time would tell whether they would bear transplanting.

Wade put his spade in the place she indicated, turned up a shovelful of dirt, making a pinpoint wound in the prairie sod. He dug deep and set the rose into the hole. Bethany poured in some precious water, and together they packed the soil—Texas soil—back around the roots.

"That's good," Bethany said, rising to brush the dirt off her hands. "Now the next thing we'll do is plant some trees."

"I wouldn't get too impatient about that," Wade told her.

"They won't grow without water. Better wait until I can manage to dig a well."

They had told Great-grandmother Allen the Virginia rosebush wouldn't grow in Missouri, but it had. Maybe it felt at home there among the log houses and the men in coonskin caps. Maybe it felt more at home there than it did in Virginia. Bethany's mother said one of the cousins went back, after Great-grandmother's death, and tried to find the parent bush, but it was gone. Maybe some plants and some people were meant to make a fresh beginning. In the old place, they'd die out, like the rose in Virginia.

She could wait for the trees. The rosebush was enough for now. It was saying she and Wade were here to stay. Things seemed a little more permanent.

"I can water it with no trouble at all, here by the door," she said.

She set about getting the house in order. They pegged feed sacks to the walls to keep the dirt from sifting in. The stripes in Aunt Polly's bright rug shone bravely, as if they had never intended to be anywhere except in Texas.

Wade made cupboards from boxes, and in these she stacked the dishes and other kitchen needs. On the table she put a bit of embroidery she had stitched for her hope chest. On the ledge went the clock and "Pilgrim's Progress" and the

poems of Mr. Longfellow. But the Bible was placed on the table, exactly in the middle of the centerpiece.

So it was that, by the time the two cowboys rode up, the place had begun to look like a home.

Wade had prepared her for their coming.

"The Triple T has branch headquarters up toward Coldwater Creek," he told her. "There'll be cowboys riding by every once in a while, going from one ranch-house to the other. Right nice fellows."

"Wade," she said, "I've meant to ask you several times. Where are your cattle?"

There were cattle all around them, grazing in groups—hundreds of them actually, although at first glance she thought there were scarcely any. That was because they were so widely scattered, grazed in so vast a meadow, that she was deceived in their numbers.

"Out there," he waved his hand largely.

"You mean—with the rest of them?"

"Sure. My Lord, Bethany, you didn't expect them to be here in the shed, did you, like the milk cow we brought from Missouri? They're running on the range now. Come roundup time next year, I'll cut out the ones with my brand and send them up the trail with the big herd."

"Don't they mind?" she asked. "The ranchers, I mean."

"Wouldn't do them any good—as long as we have open range. But it won't last long. Things are changing because of the new laws down at Austin. Anyway, don't be surprised if the cowboys wander in right often."

So she wasn't surprised when Butch and Slat came.

Wade was working on the wagon when they rode up, taking off the canvas and the bows that held it. Now it must do duty for errands and farm work. Bethany hated to watch it. So long as the canvas was in place, the wagon was a thing shaped for adventure, a ship with sails furled. Now it was only an ordinary thing, prosaic and dull. For the first time she realized their complete isolation. She wondered if the Pilgrim women, seeing the *Mayflower* sail back to England without them, had felt as she did now.

"You ol' son-of-a-gun," she heard a man's voice say.

"Hear you've gone and got yourself married."

"Sure did," Wade said. "Get off and come on in and meet her."

Carrying their hats, they came into the dugout, walking softly as if they feared to waken a sleeper.

Wade said, "Bethany, here's two no-good friends of mine. This is Butch and this is Slat."

"Pleased to meet you, ma'am," they chorused.

"Do sit down," Bethany urged. They sat down, their movements shy and gentle, like adolescent boys.

Butch couldn't have been much past twenty. His youth showed in his smooth skin, his candid blue eyes, his grave timidity, and his blushes.

Slat was older. He might have been thirty-five, and he might have been fifty. It was as if, at some stage in his life, he had hardened into a mold in which he would stay forever. At twenty-five he might have looked as he did now; at sixty, there would be little difference. Like the prairie itself, he was ageless—neither old nor young, timeless and unchanging. The prairie sun had burned him, the prairie wind had buffeted him, until now he was the color of the prairie—eyes and skin and hair melting into the tones of each other until it was hard to tell where one left off and the other began. His face was deeply lined, like maps in geography books with their little streams running into larger rivers.

He was the spokesman for the pair, but when his face settled in repose there was about it a great and tragic sadness, a melancholy like that of the land itself.

Both men wore spurs and, at their hips, guns. These they did not offer to remove—a fact which, at first, Bethany found a chilling note in an informal call. She guessed those guns were so much a part of them they were not even aware of carrying them. Not until the time came to use them, they weren't. Now they were both regarding her with a hunger that was disconcerting and delightful.

"We don't get near enough women out here," Slat ventured. "We got a saying that this country is good for men and cows, but—" he stopped, then went on carefully, "well—hard on women and horses. I hope you make out to stay."

"She'll stay," Wade said. "She made me plant a rosebush this morning, and now she'll have to stay to look after it."

"A rosebush," Slat marveled. "Ain't you told her yet about water?"

"Sure. I told her," Wade grinned, "but it didn't do any good. Can't bluff her down. You should have seen her standing up to Poco and Charlie."

Pride spilling from him like water from a fountain, Wade told the story.

"And they just turned tail and ran," he finished, boasted.

"Well, I'll be—" Slat's brought himself to a quick halt. "Well, I'll be everlastingly dad-burned." He turned to regard Bethany with searching, somber eyes. "That was a right brave thing you did, Miz Cameron," he told her finally. "Them men are as mean as—excuse me, ma'am, but them men are real mean. Ain't they, Butch?"

Butch said nothing. He had begun to blush, once he sat down, and now he continued blushing, still staring at Bethany with open and childlike candor.

"Ol' Wade said he was going back to get married," Slat's went on, "but we didn't in no ways believe him."

"Are there—are there other women out here?" she asked quickly.

"Well, there's the boss' wife." Slat's leaned back in his chair, pleased with his rôle as a neighborhood news-sheet. "She's down at Fort Worth to be with her girls while they are in school there. Then there's Miz Newsome, but she's back visiting her folks. Stays there most of the time. They're the women who ain't here."

"Are there any at home?" Bethany wanted to know.

"There's Miz Dillon, but she's sort of kept at home with a passel of kids."

"And Milly Finch," Butch put in quietly. He spoke softly, and somehow, he didn't look so young.

"Sure, there's the Milly Finch. She came out to the ranch to teach the boss' girls, and it wasn't no time until she got herself married to Tom Finch. Unmarried girls get snapped up right quick, once they get out here," Slat's said.

"She has a baby," Wade spoke up. "Some of these days we'll go see her."

Slat's eyes were roving around the room, taking in all the details. "You sure have got things fixed up pretty good," he said. "Living out here, a fellow sort of forgets what a real home looks like. This is—well, this is just real elegant."

"Thank you," Bethany said. "I'm glad you like it. And would you stay for supper?"

"Would we—oh, Miz Cameron!"

Bethany put on the best tablecloth and dishes. She hadn't thought her first guests would be two cowboys wearing guns, even while they ate, but it didn't matter. They were people. They were company. She fried some of the ham, almost the last of what they had brought from Missouri. She opened a jar of preserves. She sent Wade outside for the big tin bucket that held milk and butter and buttermilk—the bucket she kept lowered in the barrel of water for household use. She put the butter on the table in Mamma's glass hen dish. She poured buttermilk. She worked fast, with skill that came automatically.

"Well, I'll be—" Slat's paused when they came to the table. "Miz Cameron, if you ain't got butter and buttermilk!"

He regarded them with awe. He took a sip of buttermilk, then drained the glass before setting it down.

"Can you beat that, Butch," he said. "Buttermilk!"

Bethany filled his glass again. "With all those cows around, I'd think you could get plenty of milk," she said.

"Milk a range cow, ma'am!" He considered her ignorance with interest, even with compassion. "My God, Miz Cameron, you don't know what you're saying. It would be a sight easier to break a wild bronc, and besides, it ain't right to take milk away from the calves."

"And," Wade said, "you'd sooner be caught dead than milking."

"Well," Slat's admitted reluctantly, "it ain't what I'd really call a man's job. I guess it's all right for women."

Bethany opened her mouth to say, "Wade does," and then she closed it again. Maybe Wade didn't want her to tell that. This was a funny country, all right. An outlaw like Poco would refuse to harm a woman, and a kindly man like Slat's would consider it a disgrace to milk a cow for her.

"I milk that cow," Wade told him. "And don't you go saying I'm not a real man."

"I ain't telling you anything," Slat's said. "You learned me better, first time I ever saw you."

He drained his glass again.

"Main trouble with milk is," he said, "you got to farm to get it."

"Now come on, Slat's," Wade protested. "There's nothing wrong with farming. A fellow could do a lot worse."

"Well, maybe," Slat's agreed. "I reckon he could start raising sheep."

"Wade," Bethany said one morning at breakfast, "do you suppose we could have a garden? We have those seeds Mamma gave me."

Missouri was fresh and green now, with uncounted hundreds of gardens. Roses were beginning to bloom, and peonies were great fluffs of whiteness against their own emerald leaves.

"I know it's late," she said. "Here it is, almost the last of May. But it would be a start, and next year we could plan for a real one."

"It isn't that," he told her. "Nights are too cool out here for early things to do much good. You have to remember it's different from Missouri; we don't get much rain."

"We can try, can't we?" she persisted.

"You won't fret if it dries up from lack of rain?"

"No," she promised stoutly. "No—I won't fret."

"Well," he said, "where do you want it?"

"Here—to the south—" she directed, as one would indicate a number in a lottery. "It will be close to the house—so I can tend it."

"How big?" he asked.

"Oh, I don't know. As big as you want to make it."

"Bethany," he said, "from where we are standing I could plow a straight furrow for forty miles before I hit a fence."

"Go as far as you like," she said, stiffly. "So long as you get home in time for supper."

He laughed, and went for the plow and the team.

It was prairie grass, virgin soil, and the work was not easy. For hundreds of years, those grass roots had been there—involate, undisturbed, twining themselves within the safe darkness of the earth, giving to it and taking from it so that now the roots and the grass were one. Even when the roots were turned up to the sun, they lay stubborn and strong, blocking the planting Bethany would do.

The rows fell behind the plow, straight and precise. Wade worked the plot a second time, and after that they raked it together. Then they put in the seeds, smoothing the earth warm with the sun, with a vital, fresh feel to it.

How ridiculously small that bit of ground looked in the vast ocean of grass—no bigger than a postage stamp. Yet a letter had to have a stamp before it could go anywhere. This garden was a beginning.

"Now that we've got that done," Wade said, "I reckon we'd better hook up and go for water."

By this time Bethany knew that the need for water was the thing around which their lives moved. They hauled it from Newsome's spring almost three miles away, and out here that was like having water at the back door. Besides, this section was close to the breaks where Wade could pick up wood. Wood and water were the things you looked for, searching with care, treating your find with great respect.

Already Bethany had learned to guard water with automatic caution. Back in Missouri, except in drought years, one took water for granted like air and sunshine. Women washing clothes sloshed great tubs of it carelessly, as if it were a thing meant to be wasted and had come into the world for no other purpose. People filled tubs with it and cooled themselves on hot afternoons. They went to the river and fished; they led stock to drink from brimming tanks. At the foot of every little green hill small streams flowed freely.

Here, it was as if every year was a drought year, so much more grievous and prolonged than any could be in the cruellest of Missouri dry spells. Here you had to realize the value of every teacupful, of every drop. More than that—you had to learn to re-use it, so that a bucketful could serve several times.

The rosebush came first. Its drink was the last rinse water left from washing. That wasn't soapy enough to hurt it. After this, she would carry what was left to the garden. The soapy water was used for scrubbing stove and table. Oh, she managed all right, but she didn't intend to tell anybody back home how little water she had for clothes or dishwashing or bathing. They'd never believe you could get yourself or your house clean with just that.

In order to go for water, Wade hitched up the team and loaded the barrels on the wagon. Two they had brought from Missouri. One had held coal oil and, to make it usable, Wade burned out the inside. The charred wood gave water a better flavor; this was for cooking. The other had been used for

whisky and still smelled faintly of its former usage. The third was at the dugout when they came. (In case the claim was sold, some of the barrels would go with it, so precious were they out here.) This third barrel held water for the stock.

Bethany liked to go with Wade for water, although the first trip had taught her it was no easy task. Three endless jolting miles there, following no road save the faint markings made on their last trip; three miles back. The endless dipping until the barrels were full. Wade took the water from the spring and handed his bucket to her in the wagon. She poured it in and gave the empty bucket back to him. Afterward her back ached for hours, but this she did not tell him.

Why hadn't somebody told her that one of the nice things about marriage was having someone to talk to? Your talk could flow on endlessly. You didn't need to say smart things; you didn't need to answer what was said or even listen to it. Just the sound of a voice was a comforting thing, filling up the void of loneliness. Funny how a little thing like the sound of another's voice could squeeze the land down until it was almost your size.

"Want to go with me?" Wade asked.

"Sure," she said. "It will take less time with me to pour it in."

She put on a fresh print dress, and after a moment's hesitation, her second-best shoes. She was a little defiant about this—looking first at the ones she wore—sturdy, but a little on the clumsy side. When she learned how far it was to Mobetie, which was the nearest town to buy things, she had packed her second-best shoes away with her Sunday ones. But she got them out now. Going for water was fun, and she felt like dressing up for it. Besides, when you rode in a big



wagon, you put your feet up on the dashboard to brace yourself, and your shoes were out in plain sight all the time. Wade might not say anything, but he'd notice if her feet looked neat and pretty.

She stopped a moment to gather up food left from breakfast and put it into a basket.

"I'm ready," she said, coming out of the dugout. She had not yet learned to like the idea of leaving the house unlocked. Wade had told her she must never feel put out if she came home and found someone she had never heard of cooking dinner on her stove or even sleeping in her bed.

"It will probably be a cowboy. He'll leave things neat, and not hurt anything," he had said.

Wade took the basket and helped her into the wagon. "Picnic?" he asked.

"Yes—sort of."

"I brought the rifle. Thought we might see an antelope. We're short on meat. "Don't want to shoot quail or prairie chicken right now. You pick off a mamma bird before she's had time to teach the young ones to watch out for coyotes and you might as well to kill them, too."

It didn't seem possible so many birds could thrive here without trees, any more than you'd think to find fish without water. The road runner would dare them to run races with him. There were the quail and the plover, too, and a bird which the cowboys called the fe'lark. Probably a corruption of field lark, for it was like the meadow lark in Missouri. This one perched on the tall stalk of the bear grass, that "candle of the Lord," and poured out a haunting melody.

There were flowers, too. The prairie was aglow with them. Where the breaks had been overlaid with the delicate blueness of buffalo clover, the plains flowers ran to warmer tones, with yellow, orange and brownish-reds predominating. There was a little yellow flower covering the land with a rift of gold. Wade said it was the amaryllis.

There was a shimmering brightness in the air. Surely it was not possible to see so far. It must be some sort of trick.

"How far do you suppose we can see?" Bethany asked.

"I couldn't say. Twenty miles, maybe."

Far off was a lone horseman, riding toward some cattle in the distance.

"Maybe it's Butch or Slats," she said.

"Not likely," Wade told her. "Usually you see them together. Unless—well, sometimes Butch does ride alone."

"They are a strange pair, aren't they?" she remarked. "I mean, one so much older, and Butch so quiet."

He told her their story. Slats had another name then—one which had been lost in the years. Perhaps by now he did not remember it himself. He had started across the plains with a small wagon train. He had a wife and children. There was a boy, so the story went, blue-eyed and trying to act grown-up. Carrying a little wooden gun and wanting to walk alongside the men. There was also a little girl—"just a baby; looked like her eyes were going to be black, but it was too soon to tell yet."

People warned the party against the Indians, but they said they weren't afraid. There was a string of forts across the country—the Indians wouldn't bother them. Besides, the days of Indian scares were past.

The days were not past. The Indians came, at night, while the people were sleeping. They surprised the man doing the night watch and killed him. They fell upon the sleepers before anyone knew they were there. The things they did were best left untold. Everyone except Slats was killed—the wife and the little boy who had begged to walk with the men and the little girl whose eyes had not yet had time to turn dark. No one except Slats was spared, and the Indians thought he was dead or they never would have left him.

That much of the story was pretty sure. How long it was between the massacre and the time he came wandering up to the Triple T headquarters was a point in dispute. The boss gave him a job and asked no questions. He stayed at the ranch for six months and then disappeared. Just rode off into space one night. Three months later he rode back, without explanation.

That went on for several years. He'd stay a while and then ride off. From another man the boss would probably have taken no such conduct, but he never seemed to notice. It got so they could all tell when Slats was getting ready to leave—his eyes would take on a strange baffled look, as if he had to get away and yet was afraid to go. Usually he was a great talker, but when those fits came he seldom said a word.

From one of those trips he brought a slight, timid boy, with blue eyes and a manly way.

"This here is Butch," Slats explained. "Found him up in Kansas City. No place for a kid, the city ain't. He's a good kid, willing to work. Reckon you could sort of let him hang around, Boss?"

The boss reckoned he could.

The story of Butch got around. The boy had been sick and alone in Kansas City. Slats had nursed him and brought him to Texas. Butch more than justified Slats' faith in him. He became as good a cowpoke as a man could wish for. You couldn't judge him by that boyish face, that quiet way. He could handle cattle with the best of them, Butch could.

Strangely enough, after that the character of Slats' mysterious journeys changed. He was content to go no farther than Mobetie. Often these trips would come im-

mediately after payday. Slats would look his roll over, consider it, then peel out some bills and hand them to Butch.

"You keep these for me? Reckon I'll just light out for Mobeetie for a few days."

"Want me to go with you?"

"No—I'll just jog along by myself. You behave while I'm gone, mind you. Be back before too long."

What he did in Mobeetie was legend. The saloons were there and the girls on Feather Hill and the freighters and the soldiers from Fort Elliot. They all knew what drove him there. Perhaps they felt a need to help him crowd into a few days the essence of all he had once found in his wanderings. When he came back to the ranch he had the look of a man who had been long gone, had wandered far from his own kind. There was also a look of having been purged, if only for a while, of the horror that had plagued him.

Now Bethany understood better that strange look in Slats' eyes. Maybe that was why Butch scarcely talked. He knew Slats needed to do it all.

Loneliness bit into people here—made them cling to someone for companionship, a thing as needful as food. Companionship might be only a makeshift thing, but a person had to have it. No wonder Slats and Butch were always together. There were plenty of problems here besides that of earning a living.

"Wade," she said, asking the question that had been long on her mind, "how are we going to manage until we get started?"

The supplies they had brought out wouldn't last forever. Neither would the money in the bottom of the sack.

"I have my cattle," he said. "Of course, they won't be ready for a year. Anyway, I'd like to use the money I get from them to buy Newsome's section, if he'll sell. And I think he will—the way his wife acts, it's just a question of time before he'll have to pick up and take her back to East Texas. Close to the breaks, the way he is, and with the spring—well, that makes it a fine place to run some cattle."

"But until then?" she persisted.

"Now don't you worry, Bethany," he said. "There isn't any call to worry. I can pick up work at the ranches. Or sell them lake hay. Or sell them some of my crop. Tomorrow I'm going to start breaking up a piece of land and sow it to maize. After that, I'll fence it in with that new barbed wire. I asked Hud to bring me down some from Dodge City."

"Did he say he would?"

"Yes. He thinks I'm crazy, but he will. You see, Bethany, there's been trouble up in these parts over fences. Serious trouble."

"You mean shooting?"

"Well," he admitted reluctantly, "yes—some. But not much. More just sort of hard feelings. And cutting it, so it was ruined almost as fast as it got made. But there's a law now, saying you can't cut another man's fence. Anyway, I'm going on and build mine."

"But will they let you?" she asked.

"It's my land, Bethany—if I filed on it and keep my payments up, I've got a right to do anything I want with it. Anything within the law, of course."

"I came out here to work on a ranch," he went on. "I thought before I'd been here too long I'd start a herd of my own. That's the way a lot of ranchers got their start—helping out at first with somebody else's cattle. That's what Tom Finch did. Newsome would, too, except he's not got too much push about him. If he had his say, he'd go out and live on his claim. But his wife makes him stay close to the ranch house. Besides, he's secretary or something to the boss, and she thinks that sounds big."

"I hadn't been here very long before I saw a field of maize the boss had grown. He cautioned his men not to mention it. By that time they had passed the law down at Austin about homesteading, and he knew if people found out how maize would grow here, he'd be surrounded by nesters. But I saw. And when I did, I went straight out and filed on my claim."

"So that's what is in the sack with the money. Maize seed."

"Yes. I got it up there because I figured it would be hard to buy down here. Next year I'll have my own seed. And another year I'll be ready to try something else."

"And you'll be having more and more cattle," she said, caught up by his planning.

"Bethany," he said, as if he were thinking something through—something he had pondered many times, always com-

ing up with an answer which was not the one most people got, "I'm not too sure about cattle. For me, I mean. They've had a long try at cattle out here, and the business is a big thing. It will go on being big. But I think there's another day opening up."

"But, Wade, everyone says there's such a little rain. You said so yourself."

"Oh, it won't be like we farmed back in Missouri. We'll have to feel our way along. We get some rain. I keep remembering the way that maize crop looked—green and thick. A ton to the acre, and heads so big they bent the stalks over. This is good land. When you have good land and use it right, you get returns."

If he made a go of farming, that meant others would come. That was good. People who came seeking homes put down roots. They held the soil as they were held by it. People had a feeling for land. They had it back in Missouri. Wade had it here. She supposed it was the same everywhere. And they were good for a land; they filled up its emptiness. After them came good things—schools and churches and towns.

"But, Wade," she said, "they aren't going to want you to."

"Maybe not," he said cheerfully. "But I never yet heard of a person who got any place by waiting for the country to invite him to come. Well, here we are at the spring."

After they filled the barrels, Bethany unpacked her basket. Wade made a fire of chips and heated the coffee. They ate at the water's edge, and it was all good fun.

"Sure is a good spring," Wade said. He eyed it with a combination of a small boy's wistfulness and a man's sure purpose. "Well, I guess it's time we were getting along."

He put out the fire with care. He did not have to say "grass fire" to make Bethany know the reason. Even though it was not the season, you still watched out.

They were nearly home when Wade saw the antelope he had hoped for.

"Hold 'em steady," he said, giving the lines to Bethany.

It was all her fault. She should have been prepared for the fact that the noise of the gun might startle the horses. She should have held the lines taut, instead of letting them go loose in her hands. Quicker than eye could see, the lunging team flung Wade off the wagon, went careening toward home.

She tried to guide them, standing up, sawing on the lines. She tried to keep them away from the dugout. They dragged the wagon across the edge of the rise, and when they did, it rose on two wheels, hung precariously for a moment, and turned over. With it went the three barrels of water. And Bethany, like a rock in a child's slingshot, pitched over the side. She struggled to rise out of what she thought was a pool of blood—and then knew it for something almost as precious.

The water from the barrels, the work of a day, was spreading over the prairie grass. Only a little bit of it was going where it might have done the most good—on the new garden.

Her dress was sticky with mud; ooze filled her shoes.

Wade came running.

"My God! You might have been killed." He helped her to her feet, and she started to walk to the door. One step, and she sank ankle-deep in the ooze.

Wade laughed. "You are the funniest thing I ever saw."

The reaction from fright had set in, set her trembling with anger. "I'll thank you not to laugh at me," she said coldly, and went into the dugout.

Wade followed. "I'm sorry I laughed," he said, "but I couldn't help it. A muddy person—out here! Now I'll go for more water."

She set about getting clean as best she could. Her second-best shoes were ruined.

She wondered soberly, as Great-grandmother might have done, if the story of a new country was written so much in a man's struggle against danger as it was in a woman's against nature. The trail of the '49ers was marked by the men who died on the way, but something surely died in the women, too. The Indians got scalps, but the weather got the roseleaf skins, and toil took slim figures. Aunt Clara was right, wanting a look at Mrs. Daniel Boone's diary!

Already she had been here long enough to know what wind and sun and alkali water could do to the skin. Her face was dry and drawn. The wind took all the moisture out of it. The sun shone constantly and the wind blew all the time. If only there were a few cloudy days. She rubbed glycerine into her skin each night, but that wouldn't hold out forever. What would she do when it was gone? What did the other women do?

With the thought of other women came a great desire to see one. She had not been homesick before. Now dreams of home took possession—she could see women in pretty dresses, walking up and down the streets of Star Hill.

"Wade," she said when he got back, "you said there were other women out here. I want to see one."

"You aren't sick or—or anything?" he asked, worriedly.

"Good heavens, no," she said. "I'm perfectly all right. I just want to see another woman, that's all."

Chapter 3

"I've been thinking," Wade said the next day. "I've decided we're going visiting."

"Oh, Wade!" she exclaimed.

"The way you act," he grumbled,

"it's enough to make a man think you're tired of him."

She couldn't tell him how she felt. It wasn't just neighbors she wanted, but the feeling of being part of a group. She wanted not only a home, but all that adds up to a church spire and a school and a store and a doctor. No woman knows how to express this: she lumps it all together and says contentedly, "Yes, we have good neighbors."

"The boys said Mrs. Newsome isn't here," Wade went on. "It's ten-twelve miles to the Dillons', and the Finches are on another ten miles. We'll go to the Finches' and stop at the Dillons' on the way over. I'll fix the stock up so we can stay all night. The cow's dry now."

She dressed carefully. Aunt Clara had said all pioneer women wore calico dresses and sunbonnets. Maybe they did, but she wasn't going to.

Wade came up with the horses—Rex almost human in his eagerness, like a child who knew good and well he was going off to adventure. Bethany's side-saddle was on the other horse, a gentle little animal.

Bethany had named him Star, "because he has a star in his forehead, and for Star Hill."

Wade helped her on her mount. "M-m-m," he said, "we look right nice."

"I didn't want them to think you'd brought out a tacky wife," she said.

He grinned. "Mrs. Dillon isn't going to think much about how you look. Don't you expect too much of Lizzie Dillon. She's not like folks you know back in Missouri. With Milly it's different. She came out to the ranch to teach the boss' girls. Nobody could figure out why she married Tom Finch."

"She has a baby?" Bethany asked.

"Yes. Now let's see—the Dillons are over in that direction."

They rode off across the prairie grass, in "that direction." Even though she hadn't expected much of the Dillons, Bethany was not prepared for what she saw.

"This is it," Wade said, stopping before a dugout. "Hello," he called.

Five children, of varying sizes, scuttled behind the slight protection the dugout gave. Once in a position they considered safe, they stood staring with the wise eyes of young animals. There was age-old fear and caution behind their actions. By and by, they would emerge, testing each step.

A man lifted the wagon-sheet door and came out. He was tall, with a dark beard, curiously well cared for in comparison with his clothes, which were ragged and dirty.

"Howdy," he said. "Light, and set a spell. Where them kids run off to? Act like you was horsethieves, or something. Zeke, you come here and take Mr. Cameron's horse."

"This is my wife," Wade said. "Bethany, this is Tobe Dillon."

"Pleased to meet you, ma'am, and I must say Wade done well by himself. Now you git right off and come in—the ol' woman will want you to stay for dinner. Tain't often she gits to see another woman."

Wade said, "We can't stay this time. We're headed for the Finches'. Just stopped to say hello."

"Good thing you did. I hate to answer for what Lizzie would 'a' said if you had rode by without stopping. Lizz-ee—"

A tall woman in a soiled Mother Hubbard lifted the canvas. She had a long face, with deep-set eyes and high cheekbones. Somewhere back, there was sure to have been a strain of Indian blood. It showed in the dark straight hair, in her expressionless black eyes. She was like the hills in her look of strength and endurance. Her face was the sort meant to be framed by the bow of a covered wagon, her body one that

carried children easily and bore them, if not without pain, at least without fuss. Birth and death and, most mysterious of all, life itself gave her no great concern. She took everything as it came, bearing within herself an animal's power for self-healing. This was the true pioneer type—destined never to eat the fruits of the vineyards she has planted.

"You come right in," she said, dignity folded around her like a cloak. "I'll fix a bite."

The children were beginning to come back now, slipping across the grass quietly.

"Oh, no," Bethany protested. "We just stopped to say hello."

"I'd be proud to fix a bite," she repeated, a great hunger in her eyes and voice. Bethany knew it for what it was—hunger for the sight of womankind.

"I'll come in a while," Bethany said impulsively, "but don't you go and cook anything. We'll just visit."

Mrs. Dillon led the way to the dugout, lifted the sheet and threw it back. The door furnished all the light that came into the room. It furnished, too, the means by which the smoke from the crude stove escaped. A makeshift bed stood in one corner, and about the small room were other straw ticks on which the small Dillons slept. A baby lay on the bed. A rough table and a few boxes, serving as chairs, made up the remainder of the room's furnishings. On the rusty stove were a coffeepot and a skillet.

"Set," Mrs. Dillon said simply, waving her hand toward a box.

Bethany sat down.

"It was real kind of you to come," the other said. "I git a terrible cravin' to see another woman now and then."

"Have you been here long?" Bethany asked.

"Well—not in this here spot."

And then her story began to fall from her lips with a monotonous inflection. Almost it was as if she talked in order to be sure she was still capable of speech. And Bethany listened, knowing that, however much she wanted to be out of this burrow and on her way, she must give ear.

When she first came to Texas, Lizzie Dillon said, there was not a white woman within a hundred miles. She and Tobe had come from Tennessee—by stages, along a trail marked by the realities of birth and death. Part of her story she told Bethany now—part came later, bit by bit, as a puzzle is put together.

"We and the three children moved to Missouri," she said. "Jennie was a baby. She died there."

They went to Arkansas, and a baby was born there. And to East Texas, and two more were born.

"One wasn't right—he was a blue baby. We buried him in a little graveyard, out in the country somewheres. I always said some day I'd git back and put a headstone to his grave, but I ain't never done it. I could find the place, jest as easy. We was camped in a grove right by the little graveyard. We stayed there quite a while—two weeks, maybe—because I was turrible sick, too. I tried to remember the name of the town we was close to, but I can't. But I could find the place, if ever we git back that way."

There was another baby born "on the way out here." And two after they got to the first place they settled on the plains. Those children both died.

"Measles—we was in a wagon, and a norther hit, and they taken cold."

And now here was the baby, thriving pretty good. Seemed like this place was right good for the children. No chills and fever.

Bethany stirred, and Lizzie Dillon knew the visit was ended. She made no protest.

"You'll come back?" she asked.

"Yes," Bethany promised. "And you must come over and bring the children to see me."

"You must bring your wife over to see me," Bethany told Tobe, once they were outside.

"I sure will," he said gallantly. "That is, if we stay here. I'm thinking of moving. There's some powerful good land, just for the asking, over in New Mexico. The way school lands are a-cluttering up things here in Texas, a body just about has to leave to git any land all in a piece."

Lizzie Dillon stood there, immobile and patient, waiting, like the land, for the will of the man beside her. Bethany wanted to ask her how she felt about moving, but hesitated. About the woman, for all her unkempt looks, there was a sort of inviolate dignity.

"Come back," Lizzie's voice followed them as they rode off. "I'd be proud to have ye."

They had scarcely halted in front of the Finch dugout when Milly came running out—a childlike woman, soft and delicate, with an apple-blossom coloring.

"You're Wade's new wife," she cried, in a child's voice, light and unformed. "Butch and Slats told me you were here. But even before you came out, I felt I knew you."

Wade, lifting Bethany off her horse, went red and then white, and got that scared look, the way he had the day they were married—like he wished this business was over, and fast. He stood Bethany down on the ground, put his arm around her shoulder.

"Milly," he said, "this is Bethany. This is my wife."

Milly regarded her uncertainly for just a moment. And then a look of wisdom spread over her young face. She came forward impulsively and took Bethany in her arms.

"You are Bethany," she said. "How nice. Wade used to talk about you a great deal."

She could have said no better words. Wade brushed back his hair quickly, as if to say now everything was fixed up just fine and he'd leave the two of them for their visit.

"Where's Tom?" he asked.

"Out around the corrals somewhere. Go find him. Of course you've come to spend the night."

Wade looked at Bethany. "What did I tell you?" he asked.

"You've not eaten, I know," Milly said. "I'll go fix something."

She put her hand on Bethany's arm, holding fast as if afraid of losing her. She looked over her shoulder at Wade. "Now don't you men get to talking and forget to come in to eat," she said. "I'll have something ready before long."

"The men are as glad to see each other out here as the women are," she said to Bethany. "Now you come in with me—do come in."

The dugout was no larger than that of the Dillons', and it had scarcely anything more in it. But there was neatness and order about it, more pathetic than the squalor of the other one. There were books on the ledge. Calico curtains hung at the windows, and the walls were covered with newspapers. The floor was dirt—packed as hard as rock.

"I want a rag carpet the worst way," Milly told Bethany. "Slats told me you had one. But we just haven't been able to manage that yet. Next year, maybe if things go right. This year we had the baby. You must see her."

She led the way to a small wooden box, lined with pink. The baby wore a lace-trimmed dress, clean and dainty.

"Why—she is a darling!" Bethany said.

"Isn't she, now!" Milly cried. "My folks have never seen her. I keep writing, trying to tell them how she looks, but I can't seem to find the words, exactly. If we could just have her picture made. She doesn't look like other babies, does she?"

She didn't. She looked more like a doll, Bethany thought, or a picture of a baby. She was little, but that did not describe her, either. She didn't look quite real.

"She's beautiful," Bethany said. "You must bring her over to see me."

"We don't take her out much," Milly told her. "Tom thinks I should, but I know the sun's not good for her. It's so hot out here, with no trees or anything to break the heat."

She said "out here" as an exile breathes the words, as a shipwrecked sailor who has lost all hope of rescue and reconciled himself to that hopelessness. She said it with a bright courage that was at once both moving and pathetic.

Bethany sat down by the table. On it was a mail-order catalogue, opened to carpets with pink roses of unbelievable brightness. Milly caught her glance.

"Tom laughs at me because when I'm sort of blue I play a game. I get out the catalogue and make an order for something I want awfully bad. I measure and plan colors and sizes and everything. And after I've written the letter, I go burn it!" She looked at Bethany, smiling faintly. "I guess you think I'm crazy, too, don't you? You'll understand after you've been out here for a while. You'll know for yourself what the mail-order catalogues can do for us."

"I've found out already," Bethany said. "I've written for one. Sixty miles to Mobeetie—my goodness, I don't see how I could get along if I couldn't order things."

Wade had thought he needed a rifle and a shotgun and a plow to tame the country with. She'd take the catalogue, if

she had to make a choice. She wondered if maybe most women on the fringes of things didn't feel that way—if maybe the catalogue didn't go marching along across the continent right along after the covered wagons. Rifles and plows might take a country, but if a woman was going to stay in it, she'd have to have a few pretties to hold her there.

"And how," Milly asked, "do you like it out here?"

Bethany said it was different, especially from Missouri. "It's just as different from Austin, where I came from," Milly said. "When I first got to the Triple T I thought I must be mistaken—there couldn't be that much land in the world!"

"Oh, we're not bothered too much with land," Bethany laughed. She thought she'd better explain to Milly. "You know Wade isn't trying to—" She hesitated for words to express what she meant to say, and then hit upon the vernacular of the country. "He isn't trying to run much of a herd. He is more interested in farming."

"I know. Butch and Slats told me."

"They didn't seem to think so much of it," Bethany remembered.

"You mustn't mind them. They don't mean all they say. Cattlemen don't like sheep because they eat the grass too close. You can't run cattle where sheep have been—the grass is ruined."

"And they think we'll ruin it, too," Bethany said. "Fencing it in."

"Now don't you pay any attention to that. If I had my say there'd be farms so close together they'd be sitting in each other's laps! I guess that's the way most women feel. We can't get used to the loneliness."

She was preparing the meal, her movements awkward and unsure. It was easy to imagine her reading a book or playing the piano. But handling black pans in a dugout—well, that was another thing.

"And the coyotes," Milly went on. "They give me the shivers. I always have the feeling that they are trying to tempt me to come out, so they can get at me."

She was also, she confessed, with a sort of defiant shame, afraid of lizards and prairie dogs.

"My goodness," Bethany told her, feeling wise and motherly, "the prairie dogs won't hurt you."

"I can't help it," Milly said. "Tom says I'm silly. I've heard that they let rattlesnakes stay in the holes with them. Tom says that isn't so. All the same, I can't think of one without thinking of the other. If they do give the snakes house room, maybe some day when I'm not looking one of those snakes will get in and bite the baby."

"A snake is not going to bite the baby," Bethany reassured her.

"I know," Milly laughed once more. "I'm silly, just like Tom said. But anyway, the people who come out here have a lot to learn."

She had her own wisdom about the country which she passed on to Bethany now, the words incongruous on her lips. There was a difference in cow chips. The white ones were best for kindling, the brown ones made the hottest fires. A person should eat plenty of tomatoes. There was something about canned tomatoes that helped you withstand the dryness. If you ever got caught out without water, canned tomatoes would see you through. You could make several rooms in a dugout by using curtains.

"See," she said, pulling some bright calico to form a screen around a bed in the corner. "See—I had Tom put up a wire arrangement, and now I can just pull them around and make a bedroom for you."

"But that's your bed," Bethany protested. "Where will you sleep?"

"Oh, don't you worry. I have a mattress stuffed with prairie hay, and we'll make a pallet. And don't you think it's a hardship for me. When you've been out here as long as I have, you'd welcome a woman if you had to sleep right on the hard floor for a week. Now you call the men—it's ready."

Bethany got her first look at Tom Finch. Certainly the baby looked little like him. He was a stocky man, slow-moving and stolid, with big clumsy feet and square strong shoulders.

"We stopped and saw the Dillons," Wade said. "He's talking about leaving."

"He's been talking that ever since he got here," Tom said. "I wouldn't be a bit surprised if Newsome didn't have to pull out, too."

"That's where we get water," Bethany told Milly. "At the Newsome spring."

"Yes," Milly found her voice, and there was a kind of desperate wistfulness in it. "I know. They live over close to Triple T headquarters. Mrs. Newsome says it's too lonesome to live out on their claim."

"He'll keep on fooling around until he loses it," Tom said impatiently, as if he were explaining, for the hundredth time, his actions to a child who could not, or would not, understand him.

"I'd like to meet her, too," Bethany said, smoothing over an awkward moment.

The meal finished, the men went outside once more. Bethany and Milly washed the dishes.

"When I first came out here," Milly said, "I didn't see how a person could get dishes clean enough to eat in, with no more water than I use. And now all I think is whether I'm being a little wasteful."

Milly rocked the baby to sleep, singing a plaintive little melody that was like a sigh. It made Bethany want to cry.

"I've been talking too much," Milly said later. "I'm not giving you a chance at all. Haven't you been awfully lonesome?"

Bethany said she had.

"It's really harder for you. I came to the ranch first, where there were other people. Tom gets out of patience with me because I'm always wishing we could move closer to the ranch."

"I don't blame you a bit," Bethany said. "I wish it myself."

"Well, we can't, either one of us. Tom's bound to stay right here and build up his herd, and Wade's going to have his try at farming. We can wish all we want to, but we know we'll stay with them."

"Sure," Bethany said. "I guess I don't mind—really."

"You'll come back soon?" Milly urged when they left the next day. "Oh, do come back." She stood, a small, frail woman at the door of the dugout, until they were out of sight.

"I was glad you were so nice to Mrs. Dillon," Wade said.

"I felt sorry for her," Bethany told him.

"And Milly—it was better than a letter from home, for you to go see her."

The sun was almost gone now. Bethany wondered whether she'd ever become accustomed to the beauty of sunrises and sunsets. Twice a day this miracle came to the plains. At night the sun went down in a blaze of beauty—red, purple, gold—fading out slowly, to be replaced by green and rose and lavender—the soft colors of flowers one tucked away for remembrance' sake. You looked and looked, and there was nothing to break the sight of all this beauty. And then in the morning, the whole thing was repeated, as if the sunrise were only an extension of the sunset.

And now the moon came up and the land took on a luminous glow, a milk-white translucence. At home it never looked like this. In all her life she had never seen so many moon-washed miles, spread out like a giant cloth of silver.

Wade rode close and put his arm around her, almost shyly. She could feel him hunting for words. He was trying to say something to make up for the awkward moment when Milly first saw her.

"I was right proud of you," he said. "The way you looked, and all." He rubbed his face across her cheek,

coaxingly, until she turned so he could kiss her lips. "I sure was, honey," he said. . . .

The next day, Wade began plowing.

"Bethany," he said, "do you have a bucket around handy?"

"There's the gallon one I keep milk in."

"I have an idea," he said. "I need a bucket to carry it out. I'm going to make a planter out of it," he explained.

He punched holes in the thing, mounted it on a spindle sort of arrangement, filled it with seed, and set it down.

"Now," he said, "I'm ready. Want to come watch me?"

This was a big moment. This was what they had come to Texas for. She followed him outside.

He set the plow into the soil.

"Look, Bethany," he said, his voice deep with emotion.

"Look—it's never had a plow in it before. It's been lying here like this since the world began."

Bethany watched him, feeling not only excitement, but a sense of responsibility. They were plowing up the grass that had grown by itself, and they were putting in another kind of seed. They'd have to stay here and watch this new seed and harvest it, when the time came. What Wade was doing would tie them to the land; it was almost as if they were planting a part of themselves. Milly was right when she said they'd stay.

After the third round, Wade came back and attached the improvised planter—Bethany's riddled milk bucket filled with seed—behind the plow. And then he drove off again. He had a sizable portion planted when Tobe Dillon rode up.

"That's the dad-burnedest thing I ever saw," Tobe marveled. "Don't see why the team ain't run off. You look just like a kid playing horse." He laughed uproariously.

Wade was not disturbed. "I'm getting the job done, though," he said.

"You ain't got no right to treat the land this-a-way," Tobe went on, his tone changing. "This is cattle country, not farmland."

"Oh, I wouldn't be too sure of that," Wade retorted. "Look at the color of that soil, at the lay of the land. It won't wash."

"You're gol-darned right, it won't wash," Tobe agreed.

"It won't because there ain't nothing coming down to make it wash. You been out here before. You know this country. All a farmer out here will ever do is stand in the way of the ones that know what the land's good for. This is cattle country. 'Twon't never be nothing else. It's ag'in' nature to try to make it anything else."

"I don't know about that," Wade said. "You can't make a real country out of cows alone. You have to have some bread along with your meat. And people to eat them both."

Tobe spat mightily.

"Too many people cluttering up this place already," he said. "I'm a-fixin' to leave because of that. I came out here a-plannin' to run a few head of cattle and send 'em up the trail with a big herd. Figured maybe somebody would take 'em, and give me a job helping, besides. But first one thing, then another happened. Lost all my herd last winter. Now the gol-darned nesters are a-coming in and a-taking up all the land. A fellow can't run his cattle free and open like he used to."

"There's just me," Wade told him. "And Tom Finch and Newsome. We have a section apiece. We can't hurt anyone much."



"But you're a start. Others will be coming along, if you make a go of it."

Wade filled the bucket with seed, hooked it back to the plow. "Come now, Tobe," he said. "Don't take it so hard. You're no cattleman. Neither am I. We are going to have to start a game of our own: Farming to suit this country."

"It won't work. Won't rain enough to wet a pocket handkerchief."

"We get some rain here. You know the way this soil is—it holds water better. Besides, it doesn't rain other places sometimes, either. Remember how it was back where you came from? I certainly haven't forgotten the dry years in Missouri."

"Seasons ain't right for regular crops. And it's too high. Man, I remember how the team had to pull gitting us up on the caprock when we come from East Texas. Straight uphill. Thought we wasn't a-goin' to make it. And the nights are cool—mostly the ol' woman has to git her quilts out every night, even in summer. You can't raise cotton or corn with nights like that."

"We'll raise what we can."

"And that ought to be cattle. The Lord made the grass out here for 'em, and 'em for the grass. If you don't do things that-a-way you are workin' ag'in' His plan."

"You might as well say He made Missouri for the trees and us to be monkeys and leave them there," Wade said, shortly.

"Oh, hell," Tobe retorted lazily. "I ain't no man to argue. Go on and pull that crazy bucket after you and scatter seed as much as you want. The Triple T cattle will take care of it, soon as ever it comes up. You may be planting on your own land, but a cow ain't a-goin' to know or care about the difference between what's yours and what's God's and meant for her to graze on."

"As soon as I get this planted," Wade told him, "I'm going to start building a fence. Hud Johnson is bringing the wire down from Dodge City."

"A fence!" Tobe did not believe the word he heard. It hung on the still summer air, a weight rejected of earth and sky and man. "My God, man, that ain't a safe word to say in these parts. I seen men git killed for stringing up wire. Served 'em right, too. Got no call to fence off cattle pasture."

"That's over now," Wade said. "You forget the law they passed down at Austin."

"Cattlemen ain't a-goin' to like that fence of yours. Maybe they ain't even a-goin' to stand for it, regardless of how many laws got wrote on the books at Austin. That's a long ways from here, Austin is."

Wade straightened the crude implement attached to his plow. "I have to get busy, Tobe," he said. "Come by again sometime. Get up!" he said, and started off, the bucket making a clanging sound as he went.

"My God," Tobe said, watching him, "if there don't go the funniest crazy man I ever saw!" He turned to Bethany. "Can't you talk some sense into him, Miz Cameron?"

"I don't want to," Bethany said firmly. "I think he's doing exactly right."

She did indeed! Suddenly Wade didn't look funny at all. Maybe people had thought the first ranchers to venture up here were crazy. Somebody had to be first; somebody had to endure the hardships, not the least of which would be laughter.

Finally the seed was all in. Wade went to the breaks for posts, and began to dig holes for them. It was back-breaking work, and slow, but he kept at it. He set the posts deep and firm, so that the cattle would not knock them down. He took the wagon and went out to meet Hud Johnson and brought the barbed wire back with him.

The fence he built was at once a barrier and an inclosure. It looked, at the same time, childishly inadequate and menacingly businesslike. Bethany touched the frail thread of wire, and wondered how it could keep out anything. She slid her fingers along until she came to a barb, and felt the chilling import in its prick.

"What if—" she hesitated. "What if the cattle run into it and get hurt?"

"Cattle have too much sense to get hurt on it. Horses, now, are different. They get excited and don't know where they are going. But not cows."

The fence was going well when Slat and Butch rode over. They sat sideways on their saddles, and rolled a cigarette apiece.

"Well," Slat said, "Tobe told us, but we didn't believe him. A fence. Old Wade, fencing cattle off the grass. And planting stuff."

"Come in and sit down," Bethany said. "I have some fresh bread and buttermilk."

"She thinks we come to eat," Slat said, addressing no one in particular. "Every time we come, first thing she says is don't we want to eat."

"Well, don't we?" Butch asked, grinning shyly. Coming from him, it set them all laughing.

"Sure—but she ain't supposed to let on like she knows. It would be nicer if she pretended maybe we had just come calling."

"I've been calling since you left," Bethany told him. "I've been to see Mrs. Dillon and Milly Finch."

Stillness fell over the dugout. Its core was in Butch's face, but it reached out to embrace them all. The boy's eyes were alive and questioning, but it was Slat who asked how Milly was.

"All right," Bethany told him. "The baby doesn't seem well, though."

"Never has been well," Butch said softly. "From the first she looked frail-like."

"Butch ought to know," Slat said. "He was the one that rode for Doc the night the baby came. Tom was off on the ranch, and the young 'un sort of decided to slip in on 'em. Good thing Butch came along when he did."

"I just happened to be riding by at the time," Butch explained.

"What do you think of Wade's fence?" Bethany asked.

"You're a lady, ma'am," Slat said, "and I can't say before you. It isn't his fence we mind—it's just fences in general. It's like this." He crossed his knees and warmed up to his subject. "One fence is like a sprig of loco weed. By itself it ain't so bad—maybe you can pull it up, if you see it in time. But leave it there, and it spreads. And pretty soon you got loco weed everywhere. When that happens—well, you just about as well to move your herds to another range."

"It can't be as bad as that," Bethany protested.

"Miz Cameron, ma'am," Slat went on, "did you ever try to handle cattle around fences? I hate to say it, but sometimes they act like their brains were way down below nothing. A cow and her calf are as sure as shooting to get on opposite sides of the fence."

"And them both a-bawling at the top of their lungs," Butch put in, the nature of the subject loosening his tongue.

"Oh, to be sure," Slat said. "And if you cut the fence so they can get back together and quit bawling, you get your seat full of buckshot, because there's a new law down at Austin that says you can't cut fence. And the man who built that fence will sure know about it. If you try letting the fence down, the calves stand still and the maws all rush into the field the fence is around and tramp down whatever is planted there."

"You just don't have a chance," Butch said.

"Nary a ghost of a chance. Only thing you can do is to get off your horse and lift that fool calf over the fence. And while you're doing it, you get your pants tore on the wire and the calf kicks your shins. By the time you get the baby back to his nit-wit maw, the rest of the herd has wandered off maybe ten-fifteen miles. No, ma'am, no angle I can see looks good to me."

"Oh, my goodness," Bethany was half laughing, half convinced. "I don't wonder you hate for us to come out here. You make me think maybe we ought to pack up and leave."

"No, ma'am," Butch broke in so quickly that she could not believe it was really he speaking. "No, ma'am. You stay right here. Slat didn't mean you were to leave."

"No," Slat said. "I didn't mean you weren't to stay, now that you are here. Or that we aren't glad to have you. If it hadn't been you, it would have been someone else. It was bound to come."

"Well," Bethany said, "pull up to the table. Maybe after you've eaten you'll feel better about things."

They stayed until it was almost sunset. When they got up to leave, they stopped at the door of the dugout to look at the rosebush. A few green shoots were showing. Each day it seemed a little greener than it had been the day before. Each day it had its drink.

"Looks like it's going to live," Butch said. "A rosebush, out here! A rosebush and a patch of maize. Looks like you mean to stay, all right."

"You never thought anything different, did you?" Wade asked.

"No—I guess we didn't. And if you are bound to stay, we have to admit the things you are planting aren't so bad. Rosebushes and maize. Got any other ideas?"

"That's all for the present," Wade said. "Later on, maybe—"

He was silent, contemplating his idea, whatever it was. Bethany, watching him, felt at once his remoteness and his nearness. She could understand how Mrs. Cameron must have felt when he used to play the harmonica. But this was different, because he was planning for this place, and those plans included her.

Slate, too, was silent. Bethany saw Butch's eyes on him, questioning, anxious. Finally, the boy's look seemed to get through to wherever it was Slate had retreated. The older man shook himself a little and said, almost as lightly as usual, "Guess we'd better be getting along. See you later."

"Come back," Bethany urged, "any time."

They rode off together, their shadows long and grotesque. Bethany and Wade walked together toward the fence. He gave the wire a sharp rap. It picked up the sound, hummed with it, seemed alive with meaning and power, reaching out toward the two figures riding into the dusk. Something about them made Bethany shiver a little. Suddenly she wanted the shelter of the dugout—the center table with its Bible, the rocking chair with the bright cushion, the striped carpet. She felt she could not hurry toward them fast enough.

"I'll get supper while you milk," she told Wade.

By the time she got to the dugout door, she was almost running. . . .

Several days later, Wade called to Bethany, excitedly, so that she knew something important had happened.

She went quickly, drying her hands on her apron.

"Look—" he said. "The seed—it's coming up."

She followed him to the field. In the cracks that marked the edges of the turned-over sod, frail shoots of green were showing. About them, even now, there was an individuality, a certain something that set them apart from the other green around them. Upon the monotone surface of the plains they were a passementerie of curious design—frivolous, even incongruous. They did not change the real nature of the original fabric, which seemed to endure them, rather than to embrace.

"Looks good," Wade said, his voice tense with triumph. "It looks pretty good."

Bethany wanted to cry, although for the life of her she couldn't have told why. "It's the most beautiful thing I ever saw," she said, reaching for Wade's hand, and, together, they stood looking across the field.

Funny thing—it didn't look little any more.

Chapter 4

On one of his trips to the breaks, Wade brought back some wild plums. "Millions of them growing down there," he said. "Want some?"

They were small, but they were the first fruit she had seen out here. Back home, Mamma wouldn't have thought them worth picking or wasting sugar on.

"Of course," she said. "I'll go with you next time and we'll bring back all we can."

They made a picnic of it, this plum-gathering, returning at night with the washtub full. She set about putting them up, adapting her mother's recipes. Sugar was cruelly expensive, because of freight charges. That was what cost out here—whether it was people or things to keep them alive—there was the long pull from the source of supply. So they hauled water and made out with dugouts and cow chips and wild plums, so small and sour one would have fed them to the hogs, back in the land of plenty.

"We're going to have to have a railroad," Wade said.

"A railroad—my goodness!" He might as well have told her they needed the moon or the stars or a sizable portion of the planets.

"There's nothing impossible about that," he told her. "They are spreading out. Getting ready to go beyond Dodge City. There's talk down in Austin about one coming in this direction. Of course, we don't know how close it will come to us, but we can hope. They're in the air, all right."

He spoke so convincingly that Bethany almost expected to hear the long mournful whistle of a train. Her rosebush

was sending out green shoots, not despising the portion of rinse water she gave it. Why should she, at the memory of a train's whistle, feel a wave of nostalgia that threatened to overcome her?

"I'd like a railroad," she said simply.

"First time I came out here," Wade went on, "I knew the railroad had to come. I even had an idea that maybe I'd go back and play big and try to get one through myself. The first look I had at the soil, I knew it was farming country. But until you get railroads close, you can't farm enough to do any good. Cattle can take themselves to market, but grain and stuff have to go a different way."

She sat quietly listening.

"I gave up the idea," he said. "And now, it's sort of funny, but I know I'm right. I'm going to help build that railroad, after all. If enough people come out here, they'll build the railroad fast enough."

"Somebody has to start," Bethany agreed. "Maybe that's why the ranchers don't like us. It isn't just because we plow the land or build fences—it's because the railroad will follow us."

"I shouldn't wonder," Wade said. "They know they can't have ranches, the way they've been having them, on land that's all cluttered up with people. When the railroad comes, that will mean towns all up and down the track. You'll see—when the first engine comes chugging in, there'll be a big change around here. Bound to be."

Bethany had a strange feeling, like maybe she and Wade had found a page that had been used before and the record erased so that a new one might be written. When Great-grandmother came from Virginia, Kansas City was nothing more than a trading post—a wild ripsnorting dot of restlessness on the banks of the Missouri. And then it had grown to be a city, with a city's ways. From what she had heard, she guessed maybe Dodge City was pretty much as Kansas City had been in the old days. Perhaps it would be replaced by another such as it was—maybe one would grow up where she and Wade were now. Nothing so strange about the idea. Papa said anything could happen in America where you had good land. Well, this land was good enough.

Summer wore on. There was some rain—enough to make the maize grow lush and green.

"Look at it," Wade said. "It's even better than the piece the boss grew. Did you ever see anything like it?"

"No," Bethany said, honestly, "I never did."

The garden did well, too. Next year she would know what to plant. Lettuce and things like that were not so good. Peas, beans, melons and squash did best. She saved back seeds for next year. The rosebush, too, was doing well. It had, as Bethany called it, a "belonging look."

As July slipped into August, the days got hotter.

"They say June is the hottest month," Wade told Bethany, "but it sure missed it this year. I'm glad the crop was made before this set in."

Although the wind blew hot, Wade would not let her complain.

"The wind is what makes the heat bearable," he told her. "I'll bet it's ninety today, but we don't feel it. Think what this would be like back in Missouri."

She wanted say, "Goodness, Wade, the heat seems pretty bad to me. I feel like it's curling me up around the edges." But she kept quiet.

"And think how cool the nights are," he went on. "Remember how we used to suffer on hot nights in Missouri?"

There was no denying the wind made the heat more endurable, both by night and by day. Even so, she could not bring herself to like it. There was no escape from it, no hills to break its force, no trees to temper it, no streams to cool it. It came sweeping down across the miles with nothing to challenge it.

It bore the essence of the land over which it passed—the sound of its loneliness, the heat of its sun, the smell of its growing things. The odors of grass and sage and cattle were in it, so faint that their blending served only to make the air seem more pure and clear.

Bethany did not know whether it was the heat or the wind that was responsible for the mirages that came to plague her when she went outside the dugout. There were shapes of trees in them, and blue water, and white houses with flower gardens. Wade said a person saw what he wanted to see in mirages. As for himself, he saw forty acres of maize one day—thick and green and tall as a man.

Bethany said maybe he was right. Lots of times she saw a group of women, in bright summer dresses, carrying parasols, coming toward her. They were so real, she started to go change her dress in order to be ready for them.

"You get lonesome out here," Wade said. "No women to run across to see. Tell you what I'll do. First money we make, I'll send you home for a visit. That be all right?"

"That's fine."

He seemed pleased with himself for thinking of it. "Guess I'll go for water," he said.

"Want me to go?"

"Better not; it's pretty hot. You won't get lonesome?"

"Goodness, no." And when he seemed disappointed, she relented. "I'll write to Mamma."

She got out her writing things.

"Dear Mamma," she wrote. "Things look fine for us. The crop is good. I have put up a lot of plums. We had a good garden, too. The weather has been warm, but the dugout is comfortable. Wade was right—they are cool in summer. In fact, everything Wade said about this country is true."

The pages grew, all of them filled with information about the country. She was surprised at her knowledge—she had not realized how much of Wade's talk was in her mind until she began to set it down. At last, she came to what she knew would be, for her mother, the heart's core of the letter.

"Wade is very good to me," she wrote, "as he promised he would be. I am very happy."

She had addressed the letter and was ready to seal it before she decided to add: "Tell Rosemary hello." It was the first time she had written that.

She could see her mother when the letter got to Star Hill—walking down the shady street, holding it, not realizing through what devious paths it had come—from the hands of Wade to those of a cowboy who happened to be passing by, to a stage-driver, to Dodge City—then by rail, to the one it was intended for.

"And how is Bethany?" neighbors and friends would ask.

"She's fine—I have a letter here. She likes Texas."

Rosemary, too, would hear about it and get the message. Rosemary in her big house on the hill. Rosemary, who was now Mrs. Brad Bishop, wife of the banker. Brad Bishop—an old man!

It was late when Wade got back, but she had a good supper ready and had changed into a different dress and made herself all fresh and nice.

"My goodness," he said. "Somebody looks mighty fancy. Had company, or something special, while I was gone?"

"No," she said. "I just wrote Mamma."

It was a few days later that Mrs. Newsome came calling. Mr. Newsome brought her over. Bethany saw them when they drove up to the corral. She had only time to smooth her hair a little, to cast a hasty glance around the dugout, before they appeared at the door with Wade.

"Bethany," he said. "This is Mrs. Newsome."

"Oh, do come in," Bethany urged.

Mrs. Newsome was no longer young. Fine lines were etched in her face. Her nose was pinched in the merest trifle. The heaviness of her jaw was a surprise, set off by the delicacy of her other features.

She wore a gray dress, smartly made. And on her hat—with which she refused to part—was an ostrich plume. About her was an air of calculated effusiveness, as if everything she did or said was practiced first before a mirror. Beside her, Bethany felt young and awkward, conscious of her print housedress, her clumsy shoes, her work-roughened hands.

She saw the woman's eyes darting around, missing nothing, taking in the curtains, the table cover, the quilt and all the other furnishings.

"You have things very nice here," she said, her approval a condescension.

Bethany thanked her.

"I should have called on you sooner," she went on, "but I've been back home visiting. You must forgive me."

Bethany said that was all right; she quite understood.

"Goodness knows, one needs to keep right customs alive out here. There are all too few at best who try to do things as they should be done. With Mrs. Marcy gone—she's the wife of the owner of Triple T, you know—there's really no one I enjoy."

Bethany noticed she did not say "the boss," as the others did.

"You mustn't feel bad if the other women out here haven't called on you," Mrs. Newsome told her.

"No," Bethany said. "Milly can't come because she won't leave the baby, and Mrs. Dillon doesn't go anywhere much."

"Mrs. Finch is quite a sweet little thing. All the cowboys were crazy about her—especially the one they call Butch. I understand he was quite broken up when she married Tom Finch."

Bethany understood, now, the look on Butch's face at the mention of Milly's name, his eagerness to know how things went with her.

"It is a great shock for gently-reared women to come out here," Mrs. Newsome went on. "Had you realized there isn't even a church? Not even much of one in Mobeetie. I did not always go, back home, but it makes me feel downright uncivilized to know I can't go if I want to."

"I do miss church a great deal," Bethany admitted, feeling suddenly an aching desire for the little white building with its steeple pointing like a finger toward God.

"You know we live more than thirty miles from Mobeetie," the woman went on. "That's our nearest town. Though why they should call it a town, my dear, I cannot say. Clyde took me over one time when court was in session. I was never so shocked in all my life."

"It is right in the shadow of Fort Elliot," she confided. "So, they have a place called Feather Hill, with all Those Women in it, living shameless and open. We stayed in what was supposed to be the best hotel, and, my dear, we had buffalo robes for covers! When the rooms filled up, the manager let the cowboys sleep on the dining-room floor. They yelled and swore all night long. And toward morning, a man got killed, right under our window. And nobody seemed to think anything about it."

She sounded like Aunt Clara, Bethany thought.

"Of course," Mrs. Newsome went on primly, "I'm sure there must be some good people in Mobeetie. In fact, I've been told they have many social events there. But after that night, I wouldn't care to share them."

She paused a moment.

"I go back to East Texas very often," she confided. "There is no social life here at all, so I stand it as long as I can and then either give a party or go home for a visit."

That was why they lived closer to the ranch house, she explained. Clyde had a silly notion of buiding a dugout on the section where the spring was, but she put her foot down on that. "Of course, that was before you came, my dear!" she simpered.

By living closer to the ranch house, she was able to see people oftener. And if they got sick, they didn't feel so stranded. The cowboys were a real help. Of course, they didn't know much about the way to act at a real party, but you'd be surprised at the way they fitted in. She always asked them and they always came. In fact, everyone came to parties, whether they were asked or not. It was like a picnic back home—when the word gets out that someone is giving a party, everyone assumes he is invited.

"The Dillons—pardon me, Mrs. Cameron, for saying so, but they are impossible. I've never been able to give a really nice party, because they always come with that wagon full of dirty youngsters."

Bethany agreed it might be difficult, but she did feel sorry for Mrs. Dillon.

"Yes—I'm sure it's hard on her. I suppose she goes for months without seeing anyone but her own family. It's enough to make her go crazy. The loneliness, my dear," she said. "It gets you, sooner or later."

"I must be going," said the fine lady once more. "You must come to see me. And now that I've called on you, will you come to my next party?"

Bethany said she'd love to.

"Got any carboic acid?" Wade asked, coming in, after they'd gone. "I've cut my finger. How'd you and Mrs. Newsome get along?" he wanted to know.

"Oh—all right—"

"You mustn't mind what she says. She's sort of silly. Harmless, but silly. I should have warned you."

"She didn't bother me any. It's good to see another woman, silly or not."

"Even if she does all the talking."

"Even if she does all the talking. She's going to be giving a party one of these days. Wants to know if we will come."

"Sure. She didn't need to invite us. Everybody goes to parties out here. Reckon she'll stay home long enough to give one?"

He turned to go back to his work. And then he stopped and grinned, running his hand through his hair.

"Don't you let her put any ideas in your head," he warned. "If you start trying to run around the way she does, I'll chain you to the fence."

Mrs. Newsome's visit did one thing for Bethany—it made her realize how much she missed going to church. As yet, all the Sunday observance she and Wade knew, outside of a day of rest, was reading the Bible and singing hymns.

"I will lift up mine eyes unto the hills," Wade would read, and Bethany, lifting her eyes, could see no hills—nothing but sky and the promise of endless distance.

And yet there was something about the vastness of the land that was, in itself, strength and assurance. She felt this especially in the evening when a mauve veil fell softly over the landscape. Twilight was magically generous with this country, giving it a sense of mystery and fulfillment.

She said, "Wade, I wish we could go to church. I suppose there isn't any way."

"Not unless we go to Mobeetie."

Mobeetie. Sixty miles away, with the treacherous Canadian between.

"I tell you what," he said. "There's a traveling preacher somewhere. I'll try to get word to him to come and hold services. He's quite a character."

The preacher arrived, late one Saturday—a tall, thin man on a rangy horse. He carried a camping outfit, a few clothes and song books wrapped in oilcloth. In his pocket was a Bible and across his saddle a Winchester.

"I am Brother Fenton, the Traveling Preacher," he told Bethany. "It was good of you to send for me. I have taken the liberty of spreading the word that there will be services here tomorrow."

From a radius of eighty miles, people began to arrive the next morning, bringing baskets of food.

"I have a kettle of beans," Lizzie Dillon said. "The kids relish them when they won't eat nothing else. I'll just set them on the stove to heat. I'll be proud to help. A meeting is awful nice, but it comes hard for the woman where they have it."

"I don't mind," Bethany said. "I'm glad it could be here."

Lizzie Dillon looked at her thoughtfully.

"I sez to Tobe," she went on, "first time you came to see us, I sez, now, that Wade Cameron has gone and married himself a good woman. You ain't a thing like he made out you was, before he fetched you here."

Tom drove up just then, with Milly beside him holding the baby, and Bethany hurried to greet them.

"It was such a nice day, and Tom was determined to come," Milly said, "so I finally said I would. It's the first time I've taken her anywhere." And then she went on, "I've brought you a plum cobbler and roast prairie chicken. There's no telling how many will come. A church service is a great event out here. You wouldn't believe how the cowboys enjoy it."

The crowd was growing now. Butch and Slat rode up, carrying a large piece of beef.

"Brought you some meat," Slat said. "Don't ask us how we wangled it out of the cook. Just take it and be glad to get it. Hi there, Milly. Good to see you. How's the little tyke?"

"Come say hello to her," Milly told him.

"Well, the little booger," Slat exulted. "She smiled at us." Butch reached out his finger, and the baby's hand closed around it. "My gosh, let's get out of here," Slat said. "Here comes Miz Newsome."

Mrs. Newsome wore a hat with a veil and white kid gloves.

"Why, how do you do, Mrs. Cameron," she said. "It's good of you to have us here today. I'm glad you felt you could come, Mrs. Finch. Good morning, Mrs. Dillon."

"I've brought a cake," she added, importantly. "It ought to be good. I used eight eggs and a cup of butter."

"I'm sure it is," Bethany said, politely.

Among the beans and prairie chicken and plum cobbler, the cake looked as much out of place as the kid gloves.

"Won't you have off your hat and things?" Bethany asked.

"I suppose I will, although one really should wear them at a church service."

"We're going to eat first," Bethany told her.

Brother Fenton, a practical man, had arranged this.

"You have ridden far," he told the people. "It is best that we all refresh ourselves. After that, we will hold services."

The men had improvised tables in the yard, and the women carried the food.

"Ah, this is good," Brother Fenton said. "Now let us ask God's blessings upon it."

As he lifted his hand, a reverent hush fell upon the crowd. Even the small Dillons, restless and hungry, stood quietly while the preacher spoke to a God of whom they had scarcely even heard.

It was good to hear a preaching, but it was good, too, to eat with their own kind—to hear talk and laughter, know themselves part of a social unit. The preacher knew this, and he let them savor the last bit of food, the last bit of companionship before he again raised his hand.

"And now it is time for services. Let us help the good women clear away first, for they have done much, and are tired," he said.

When the songbooks had been passed, he spoke again: "Let us sing 'On Jordan's Stormy Banks I Stand.'"

On Jordan's stormy banks I stand
And cast a wistful eye.

Bethany thought, "That's what Wade and I sang on the road down."

I'm bound for the promised land.

The voices rose in the vastness of the landscape.

O'er all those wide extended plains
Shines one eternal day.

They sang "Beulah Land" and "Come, Thou Fount of Every Blessing"—the words warm and lovely on their lips. In a land far removed from fountains they sang of them, but no one thought of the lack.

After that, Brother Fenton read the words so familiar that he did not really have to look at the Bible at all, but the feel of the book was good in his hands. And when he talked to the people, he knew that what he said did not matter—they were not listening so much as they were remembering other sermons, in other places. His business was to keep alive what other ministers had nurtured. Not for him the church with walls and stained-glass windows and an altar rail. Some day there would be such a one here, but by then he would be gone, for he was a traveling preacher, and his work was clear and sure in his heart.

"We will pray," he said. And he prayed earnestly but not too long—these people had far to go, and besides, they needed contact with their fellowmen as much as they needed communion with their God.

"And now may the grace of God go with you," he said. "Amen."

It was late afternoon before the last visitors rode off. The cowboys went in groups, but somehow it seemed to accentuate their loneliness. Milly and Tom were a unit; the Dillon children, most of their shyness gone, gave that wagon a comfortable family look; even the Newsomes had an air of destiny shared.

Bethany watched them all go.

"Lone men have it hard out here, don't they?" she asked. Wade laughed, as he put his arm around her.

"Now, aren't you ashamed," he said, "fishing for compliments. I've a good mind not to tell you. If you mean am I glad you came out with me, honey, I sure am!"

("It's just to spite me, he's taking you to Texas," Rosemary had said.)

Bethany leaned against him, thinking how silly it was to remember.

Summer slipped into fall.

About it there was little of Missouri opulence—no shocks of corn like Indian teepees, keeping watch over the land; no orchards bending with loads of ripe fruit; no leaves of red and gold. In spite of this, there was a sense of hushed expectancy and fulfillment.

Wade cut the maize and said, "Almost wish it hadn't done so well."

Bethany knew he didn't mean it.

He piled wood against the dugout, saying, "Come in mighty handy this winter when the chips are wet."

"You're thin, Wade," she said. "I'm going to have to feed you better."

"You aren't so fat yourself." He looked at her closely. "But then, you've had a lot of things to get used to."

"I don't mind," she told him, staunchly. "All I worry about is maybe the cattle will go off too far to graze."

The grass was the real richness of the country. One way or another, it sustained them. This autumn grass did not have a dead look like Missouri grass in drought. It had resourcefulness; adaptation.

"It's rich as hay," Wade told her. "Send a cow to Galveston, and she'll starve to death in a week on that stuff that's all water."

With the coming of autumn they began to worry about fire, for fire menaced this source of life, the grass. Fear of it and precautions against it were inherent in every plainsman. Wade put out matches with the greatest care, putting each broken match into his pocket.

"I saw one burn a hundred miles once," Tobe said. "Looked like there was *no* stopping it. You'd think it was over, and the wind would change and make it start all over again. Sometimes I think fire just breaks out of itself out here."

Could it? Bethany wondered. Did the country want to be rid of them and take this means to wipe them out, as a wave washes away the sand castles children build?

It was at this time that Mrs. Newsome sent word she was going to have a party, and hoped she could have the pleasure of Mr. and Mrs. Wade Cameron's company. A cowboy brought the written invitation.

"She'd like an answer," he said.

Sure enough, the letters R.S.V.P. were there in the corner. Bethany wrote an acceptance.

"There," she said to the cowboy. "I've told her we'll come."

"Thank you, ma'am," he said. "She made quite a point of it."

When Bethany and Wade rode up the night of the party, the corral was crowded. You could tell the cowboys' horses; they stood so quietly. Rex and Star had to be tied to the fence.

The Newsome dugout had two rooms. Most of the furniture had been removed from the front one for dancing.

"Oh, how do you do, Mrs. Cameron," Eva Newsome said, extending her hand elegantly. "And Mr. Cameron. I'm so glad to see you!"

She and Clyde stood at the door to receive their guests, she in a party dress, delicate shoes and elaborate hair-do; he with embarrassed reluctance.

"Take your things into the other room," she instructed.

Bethany went into the other room, a combination kitchen, dining and general-utility room. A table had been extended by some ingenious method so that it looked like a table and not planks laid over sawhorses, as it surely was. On it was a linen tablecloth, and over that, thin material to cover the food and decorations.

Milly was there, bending over her baby. "Oh, it's good to see you!" she cried. "I didn't want to come, but Tom was so anxious I didn't have the heart to disappoint him."

The baby was lying quietly—too quietly, Bethany thought. She must be more than six months old now. By that time, most babies wave arms and legs and make a great fuss to be taken up, but this one made no fuss at all.

Milly, wearing a white dress which Bethany suspected was part of her wedding clothes, looked little more than a child herself—a little girl admiring a beloved doll.

Butch and Slat came in just then, and Butch's young face was illuminated when he saw Milly.

"Why, hello, Butch," she said. "Come see Baby."

Butch went over to stand beside her. His eyes were gentle and a little sad.

"Just think—you haven't seen her since the day of the preaching at Bethany's. Hasn't she grown?" She begged him to agree, to say yes and lay forever the doubt in her own heart. "Tom says she's the littlest thing he ever saw."

"Yes, she's grown, all right," Butch agreed.

"Oh, thank you, Butch," Milly cried. "You were so good that night. I don't think Tom or I have ever thanked you for it."

Butch's face was crimson; he moved his hands restlessly. "It wasn't nothing," he muttered. "I just happened by."

"Oh, no, Butch," Milly assured him. "I was awfully sick, but I knew all about it. And I thank you. If it hadn't been for you, Baby and I might have died." They were silent, standing there together. "We must go back with the others, Butch."

The Dillon children were in the front room, looking like young wild things cooped up. They sat in corners, peering around fearfully at the unaccustomed grandeur.

The fiddler took his place. "Gents, git yore pardners!"

Wade came to Bethany, led her out on the floor. The rows of men and women faced each other.

"Salute yore pardner," the fiddler commanded.

The cowboys were frankly woman-hungry. A fellow could ride for days, seeing nothing but men and cow-critters. Then he came to this, where there were women like back home. He'd forgotten how small their hands and feet were, how soft and delicate their dresses. A man could get drunk, just looking at them.

"Excuse me, ma'am—will you dance this one with me?" a strange cowboy asked Bethany.

Lizzie Dillon went by, stepping light and free, her face alight. For the moment she was as young as the spirit of the girl this partner might have loved; she was as old as the mother he had left somewhere back in the woods of Texas.

Bethany saw Milly dancing. She saw Eva Newsome, forgetting her party manners. She heard the hoarse voice of the fiddler, calling out the steps. She felt the quiver of the floor as the dancers stamped their feet, clapped their hands. It was almost like a dream.

Soon after midnight Mrs. Newsome signaled the fiddler. He laid down his bow; the dancers stood still.

For Bethany, the room settled back in place. She saw the Dillon children asleep in the corner on the sogan their mother had brought for a pallet. She saw Milly slip into the kitchen to take a look at the baby. She saw Wade glowering at her across the room and realized she had scarcely danced with him all evening. The etiquette of the land demanded that he let the other men dance with her—all those lonely cowboys who had come so far. That he was resigned to, but he didn't like to see her enjoying it so much.

"Refreshments are served," Mrs. Newsome said, and led the way into the other room. She had sent for things hard to come by: oranges, so beautiful and rare they might have been real gold. There was chicken salad, and small sandwiches which the men eyed with distaste. There were nuts and bonbons in silver dishes, and a huge cake, with intricate icing, representing an extravagant outlay of eggs. It was all out of place in this dugout kitchen. The guests would have been the first to accept genuine hospitality; likewise, they were quick to see through pretensions.

The feast over, they were ready to dance again, when Tobe Dillon opened the door of the dugout.

"Look!" he shouted. "Yonder!"

Against the horizon was light that was not moon or sun. "Grass fire!" they said, together, knowing too well the menace that was bearing down upon them.

They said, "It's a big one. Look at the smoke."

As a unit, the men moved to their horses, the party forgotten. Where there had been only light, moments ago, now red tongues of flame danced like imps in hell against the horizon.

"It's headed north," someone said.

North! Away from the breaks, away from the river—toward their place, Bethany realized.

Ranchers, cowboys and nesters alike moved together to fight this thing. There was no talk of me and mine. They saw the fire and they went forward as if facing an enemy half-human, half-demon.

"Better stay here," Wade said. "Later you can help bring us something to eat and some water." He didn't add, "You couldn't go home now if you wanted to."

So the women and children stayed at the Newsome place, waiting, as women always wait, while their men do battle.

They took the despised plow, and put it to new use. They plowed strips of prairie sod. Fire guards, they called them, but the red monster hurdled them easily. The wind picked up cow chips, starting new flames.

The men made backfires between the main blaze and the land they wished to protect, placing them with cunning, watching them like a doctor giving a patient new medicine, in

a last desperate effort. There was no water here, so man must make of himself a semblance of fire's enemy.

Lizzie Dillon, who had weathered everything and felt no fear, took command of the women.

"They'll stop it," she declared. "They always do. Sometimes it takes longer'n others, but they manage."

She could be calm, Bethany thought, rebelliously. About her place there were no row crops drying, no curtains at dug-out windows. No maiden's-blush rose was taking root beside her door. If her burrow was destroyed, she and her mate and her young would move to another.

"Come morning," Lizzie went on, "I reckon we'd best take them a bite to eat. We can load it in my wagon."

"I'll go with you," Bethany said. "I'll ride Star."

Morning came, eerie and unreal. The sun rose red in the east; in the west was that other grim redness.

"It ain't quite so big," Lizzie said. "They're a-whippin' it. I knowed they would. We'll take the stuff to eat now and the water."

They packed the food left from the party into pans and put a small barrel of water into the wagon. Eva Newsome's face showed gray and old in the light of dawn. Bethany was beyond fatigue, beyond feeling of any kind.

Mrs. Dillon wakened the children, still sleeping on the sughan, and got them into the wagon.

"Shouldn't some of us go with you?" Milly asked.

"You best stay here and take care of the baby," Lizzie said, kindly. "And you ought to lay down and rest, Miz Newsome. You're plumb wore out from the party. It was shore a nice party," she added, taking the lines in her hands. "Git up, Bess. Git up, Kate."

She drove with sureness and confidence; the children sat quiet, and Bethany followed on Star. Afterward she remembered that not once were the children restless. They had been schooled to follow without question the ways of their elders in times of emergency.

About mid-morning they came upon the fire-fighters, who had just killed an old bull and split him wide open, so that his carcass formed a flat surface. Four cowboys, ropes fastened to their saddle horns, made ready to drag this strange piece of fire-fighting equipment.

"Wouldn't you like some water?" Bethany asked. "And something to eat?"

"Yes, ma'am," they said. "We could use some water and grub, all right."

Bethany looked at the bull. "Seems sort of a shame," she said. "Killing cattle, I mean."

"Well, ma'am," a man said softly, "maybe so, but I reckon this one would be right proud to know he helped stop a fire."

It was the ancient ritual of sacrifice, giving one in order to propitiate the wrath of the gods against many. Maybe it was like that everywhere. A few have to suffer so that things will be easier for others.

"How are they a-comin'?" Lizzie asked. "A-stoppin' it?"

"I can't say, ma'am," he told her. "Sometimes we think so, and then the wind changes and blows it back where none of us are working."

He bent over to beat out a small spark with his slicker. The gesture was automatic. The spark had landed on the trail and was out almost before it struck. You put out a fire when and where you saw it. The monster they were fighting had probably been, at one time, a spark no larger than this.

"Seems like the wind blows from all directions at once when we get to fighting a fire," he said. "Guess we'd better be getting along. Thanks for the grub and water."

"We'll drive on up the trail," Lizzie told him. "No fire up that way, is there?"

"Haven't heard of one."

"Tell the others where we're headed, and that we got stuff to eat."

"That's right kind of you, ma'am," he said. "Most of them are back a ways where the fire is worst, but I'll tell them. Maybe they can sort of spell each other off."

"Tell them I'm working on toward home," she said. "I'll git them kids out of the wagon and bring back fresh grub and water."

"That's fine," the man said. "Looks like we may be at this for quite a spell yet. So long!"

"If you see my husband," Bethany called after him, "will you tell him I've gone home?"

The trail ahead ran through grass already blackened by fire and looking like soft, dark cloth. When the horses' feet

touched it, black dust arose, acrid and choking. Off to the right, flames rose against the sky: the fire was on two sides of them. Where it would go next was a matter that rested with the zeal of the fighters and that arch-villain, the wind. What was it Tobe Dillon had said? "Sometimes I think fire jest breaks out by itself here."

"Looks like we ain't a-goin' to have a chance to git rid of this grub," Lizzie said, turning to Bethany. "Miz Cameron," she said, "the wind is a-changin'. We'd best git down the trail as fast as we can. It don't look so good back of us."

Bethany looked. What she saw made panic well up in her. On three sides was fire—behind, to the left and to the right. Only the way ahead was clear.

"You'd best tie your horse to the endgate and git in the wagon with the kids," Lizzie said, quietly.

Something in her voice made Bethany obey instantly. The children received her with unblinking regard, as they would have any other fresh discomfort. One of the older girls reached over with a womanly gesture to pick up the baby, and held it close.

Lizzie slapped the lines over the horses' backs, and they started off at a smart trot, tossing their heads in nervous excitement. Bethany hoped she had tied Star securely. It would be too bad if he broke loose in fright. Turning to check the knot, she exclaimed in amazement.

All the wild things were coming—the coyote, the antelope, the lobo, the deer—running swiftly in terror. Cattle came, too, and the birds, and the jackrabbits, their great ears erect. Hunted and hunter were as one, joined in a great exodus of fear and horror, fleeing the thing more fearful than fear itself. The strange horde passed the wagon as if they did not see it.

And now the fright of the horses almost matched that of their wild brothers. Only Lizzie's expert handling of the lines kept them steady. The wagon rattled perilously. "What if it falls to pieces?" Bethany thought. "We'll be left in the path of the fire." Why hadn't she stayed on Star?

"Now listen, Miz Cameron, and you kids," Lizzie began.

She had long since lost the last of her hairpins. Her black hair hung loose, whipping back from her face like a banner. Her directions were quick and tense, like a general who sees only one chance to win and that if his men obey—without question.

The boys were to peel off their shirts, and Bethany was to wetten them with what was left of the water. She must put one on her head, protecting her face, and the other she was to hand Lizzie. The kids were to get under the sughan. "—And Eli, you shuck out of them britches of yores."

Eli forgot false modesty. He pulled off his pants, stood for one moment as naked as the day he was born, and then plunged under the sughan.

"Now you git them britches real wet, too," she told Bethany, "and when a spark blows in, you beat it out with them, see? And if the wind lands a burning chip in the wagon, you jest shovel it out with one of them plates Miz Newsome put the grub on."

"Yes," Bethany said, locating a plate.

The red wall was closing in. It was a sound and a smell and a light. New fire had broken out so unexpectedly, there were no fighters near.

"We'll jest make a run for it," Lizzie said. Standing in the wagon, she struck the horses. "Git up," she said.

The road was a narrowing wedge whose outlines were sketched in fire. Heat struck through the wet shirt, and smoke stung Bethany's nostrils. A flying disc of burning cow chip hit the sughan under which the children were cowering. Bethany scooped it up on a plate and threw it over the side of the wagon. She beat out the smoking place on the blanket with Eli's wet pants.

Now the team was frantic, flying across the prairie, down the trail. The air was full of chips, flaming like meteors. The wagon swayed wildly. Once Star stumbled, righted himself, came on after the wagon, as if he knew that in that action lay safety, life itself.

"Good old Star," Bethany whispered, feeling her cheeks wet with tears.

The path was very narrow now. The path was not there at all. There was only a thin line through which no human being could pass, and live. Bethany shut her eyes. Her lips moved stiffly in prayer. To perish by fire! To die in a blazing funeral pyre with Lizzie and the children—naked little Eli and the girl who held the baby against her breast and the others. A wave of love for the doomed children swept over

her. If only she might hold one of them close for comfort. To die by fire! Never to see Wade again. Oh, God!

"Well, Miz Cameron," she heard Lizzie say, shakily, "we're through."

Bethany opened her eyes. The prairie stretched ahead, free of fire. Behind them, a red wall had closed in.

"Looks like it's already burned off here," Lizzie said, surveying the burned grass. "Must have happened last night. You kids can come out now if you are a mind to. Eli, we'll turn our backs whilst you put on yore britches. And don't you fret about 'em being wet."

They came to the Dillon dugout, a small place in an ocean of blackness. Fire had burned corral and rickety shed, but the dugout itself was there, and Bethany thought she had never seen anything so wonderful, so safe, when Lizzie stopped the creaking wagon before it.

"Well," she said, "we're safe. And I reckon I better be gittin' in. I don't feel so good."

"Oh, Lizzie," Bethany cried, "you're ill. Let me help you."

Sweat poured from Lizzie's face.

"Now, Bethany," she said, "you ain't to worry about me. I'll be all right. Jest let me git to a bed."

Bethany helped her in to the bed in the corner.

"Isn't there something I can do?" Bethany cried.

"No," Lizzie said, "there ain't. If I lay right still, like this, until morning, I'll be all right. I ain't never lost one yet with a mishap, and I ain't a-goin' to lose this one."

Bethany built a fire in the stove and cooked whatever she could find. She fed the children, who accepted her now as if she were one of them. She took the baby in her arms, and when it was asleep, laid it beside its mother. Lizzie lay with closed eyes, seeming to draw strength from some deep reservoir within herself. She had said she would be better by morning. There was nothing to do but lie down beside the children, Bethany decided. . . . Scarcely had she straightened out on the hard bed, than she was fast asleep.

In the morning Lizzie was better, even as she had promised. "I knowed I'd be," she said. "You didn't have no call to worry."

"Oh, Lizzie," Bethany cried, clinging to her, "you saved our lives."

"I didn't do nothin'," Lizzie said, stroking Bethany's hair. "Nothin' at all. Now you better be gittin' on to yore own place. You're a-dyin' to see about it, I know."

The fire had stopped short of her own dugout, she found. There it stood, beautiful and unharmed, in unmarked grass. The corral was there, and the shed and the maize patch. The rosebush, too. Shame on her, to be so glad they had been saved when her own neighbors had suffered! But even at the thought, joy swept over her afresh.

Everything was safe, and Rex was standing by the corral! That meant Wade was home. She urged Star on, her heart racing ahead to the haven of Wade's arms.

Not stopping to tie Star, she ran to the dugout and flung open the door. Wade wheeled to face her. He reached out to take her in his arms, tilting back her head and bringing his lips down on hers. His body smelled of smoke, of sweat, of fire, but it was heaven to be here.

"You crazy little idiot," he said. "You don't know what I've been through. Where were you?"

"I was with Lizzie Dillon," she said. "And we're safe!"

"Yes," he said, rubbing his chin against her hair, her face. His beard hurt her skin, but it felt wonderful. She couldn't tell him about her experience; not yet.

"Go get your soap," he said. "I can use it on my face."

And then they were both laughing hard. Much of the grass on which they'd hoped to run their stock this winter was burned. Now their precious maize must go for feed, instead of for money to pay on the land. But they were young, and they had the most important things: the dugout, the rosebush, laughter and each other.

They would manage.

It was the Dillons—Lizzie in the front seat of the wagon, her face patient and immobile, a blankness on her that might have passed for resignation. The young Dillons peeped out like young foxes viewing a new barrow. About them there was no hint of their mother's resignation, if such it was. Nor did they show any touch of their father's nervous eagerness. "Want to talk a little business with Wade," said Tobe, walking off toward the corral.

"Oh, it's good to see you, Lizzie," Bethany said. "Is—is everything all right?"

"Yes," Lizzie answered.

"I'm so glad," Bethany said, wondering why she should be happy at the prospect of another Dillon child. It would be only an added weight for the creaking wagon, another life to be forever uprooted by Tobe's restlessness, perhaps just one more grave for Lizzie to remember in her heart.

"I knowed I'd be all right if I took care," Lizzie said. Ah, that was it! To Lizzie, this child was important. Lizzie, who gave life, would recognize the value of the gift. That was why she was able to bring them all through the fire that day—the children cowering under the sogan, the one as yet unborn, and Bethany. Lizzie was too wise to question the reason for life; she was content to cherish it.

"Come in," Bethany said. "I'll make coffee and fry flap-jacks for the children. Now don't tell me you have to rush right off."

"I don't know as it's worth while," Lizzie said. "Comin' in, I mean. We'll have to be gittin' along in a minute. We're a-movin'."

"Oh, no!" Bethany cried. "Why—you can't," she finished lamely, knowing as she spoke that they would, that they were.

"It's the prairie fire," Lizzie explained. "Looks like it was jest too much fur him. Says he can't winter no stock on burnt grass."

"Where are you going?"

"New Mex. He says there's good land out there, and free, besides. Says it's a-gittin' too crowded here."

"Why don't you put your foot down?" Bethany said. "You won't find any better land than this, and it's not so expensive. If you stay here, pretty soon we might have a school. Why, I'd even be willing to try to teach one myself, if you'd stay. And maybe we could get Brother Fenton to come for regular services. I've been wanting to ask Wade about that."

"Yes, I know," the woman said.

She knew all that Bethany was saying—had already said it to herself many times, and to her man. Bethany's was the quick hopeful wisdom of inexperience, but Lizzie Dillon knew the answers the hard way.

"I know," she said, and in her voice was a sort of compassion now for the ignorance of young Bethany Cameron, so newly married that she did not know the ways of men. "But it's jest no use to try to talk to a man, once he gits his mind made up. The kids air as bad as he is," she went on, patiently. "When they git it into their heads to move, men and young-uns, you might as well give up to 'em."

She had given up to them. Other women would plant a vine and refuse to leave it, but not Lizzie Dillon. She would go with Tobe, wherever he went, and take all the hardships of a new country. Never the vine for her, or the hearthstone. Never a maiden's-blush rose beside her door.

The men came back to the wagon.

"I've been trying to talk some sense into that man, of yours," Tobe told Bethany, "but he won't listen to me. Don't blame me if you starve to death this winter or git yourself all worn out trying to pay for this piece of land."

"We'll manage," Bethany said.

"Sure you ain't a-goin' to change your mind?" Tobe asked again. "You and me could stake out a mighty fine parcel of land out in New Mexico."

"No," Wade said. "I'm staying."

"They ought to give you this claim," Tobe said. "The State ought to pay you for livin' out in this God-forsaken hole. They got their nerve, askin' a man to pay for land like this." He had failed here, and he hated the land, blaming it for his failure. "They ought to be glad to give it away, them smart-alecks down to Austin. I'll show 'em! They're giving better land than this away out in New Mexico."

"I don't want anybody to give me my land," Wade said. "I'd rather pay for it myself."

"You'll pay for it," Tobe told him. "Or you'll lose it and all you've put into it. You'll pay heavy for it."

Chapter 6

If they felt they could manage, it was not a sentiment shared by Tobe Dillon.

Bethany was washing dishes one October morning when she

heard a great commotion outside. A man's voice called, "Hello," and she went to the door to answer.

"That's all right," Wade said. "That way, I'll feel more like it's mine. I'm not meaning to lose it, either."

Tobe slapped the lines across the backs of the bony horses. His anger had spent itself.

"Well, so long," he said. "If you ever change your mind, jest get in touch with me. Could be I could git you in on some good free land."

"Of all the crazy things," Bethany said, when they were out of hearing. "If they had just stayed on that claim of theirs, they could have made something out of it. It's like throwing away three years of their life."

"He didn't have a claim, Bethany," Wade said. "He was only a squatter."

A squatter. That explained everything. A homesteader came with law and order behind him. The squatter settled like a parasite, taking all he could get and giving nothing in return. He stayed only as long as things were good; but the nester stayed on. This was his home, his future.

Bethany took another look at the disappearing wagon, then turned to look at their place. Maybe Tobe was on his way to something better, but she doubted it. Maybe she and Wade were fools to stay here and work the way they would have to. Maybe Tobe was right when he said the State ought to give them the land.

No. Wade was right. Mostly people paid for what they got. She was young, but already she knew that. Anyway, a body liked a thing better when he paid for it—it represented something, like her plum preserves. A housewife wouldn't have given them shelf-room back home, but here they were treasures.

"Well," she said, "I hope things turn out all right for them. I guess there have to be men like Tobe Dillon, to go places first."

Wade agreed absently.

"Know what I'm going to do?" Bethany said. "I'm going in and count my jars of preserves."

She felt very settled, at one with the country. . . .

Wade went on making preparations for winter. On three sides of him the blackened earth spread, bearing the marks of the fire. In only one direction there was grass, and that was open range, a thing to be shared. In the middle of this, the field of maize looked like a child's toy, pretty to look at, but wholly inadequate to the demands that would be put upon it.

Wade was busy storing some of it in the shed. "Some of these days we'll have a snow," he said. "I don't want to have to go out and dig food for the stock when that happens."

The biggest, finest heads he put into another pile. "Seeds for next year's planting," he explained.

He was like a traveler who never sees the ground on which his feet are set, but looks always ahead. He hauled up more wood. He checked the dugout to be sure that all was snug and tight. Bethany could well believe those preparations might be necessary, for even in this country where there were no trees and shrubs to tell about the death of summer, there was still the feel of nature closing in for the winter. The filmy haze of Indian summer, lacking telegraph poles and trees to thread itself upon, filled the air.

There were days of this, so lovely and quiet that it seemed each one touched the earth with loving, gentle fingers, reluctant to be gone. And then one night the rains began.

At first they were a fine mist, their coldness seeping through the land. The burned grass was mercifully cleansed. Nature, bearing the power to destroy, bore also the power to heal. Her destruction might come as a raging fury, but her healing was gentle, holding in it the sadness of regret.

There had been times in the summer when Bethany, looking at the bright metallic blueness of the sky, felt she would have given anything for the boon of only one small cloud to break the searing force of the sun. Now, she wanted nothing so much as the return of the sun.

"This rain," she said. "I'm getting sick of it. Besides, it's ruined all the cow chips."

"I never thought I'd live to see the day you'd be mourning because there weren't any chips," Wade said. "Remember how you were ready to run back to Missouri the first time I brought them to camp? You acted like a locoed bronc."

"It wasn't quite that bad," Bethany protested. "But, anyway, I've got so used to them now, I don't feel right using anything else."

She was very saving with wood. How helpless you were here, how dependent on the whims of nature. You com-

plained about the endless blaze of the sun, forgetting that because of it the cow chips were good for fuel. The wind got on your nerves, but it cooled things off. The flatness was enough to set you crazy, but level fields were easier to cultivate. She supposed it was always like that. Every country offered you something, if you were smart enough to take it.

"If it clears tomorrow," Wade said, "I'll go for water."

"All you need to do is to stick your head out the door," Bethany said.

"Why, you sassy little thing," he laughed. "You're as bad as Rex. Need exercise to keep you from getting mean. I thought you got tired of the sun shining all the time."

"I take it all back," she said. "Besides, we need wood more than we do water. The rain fills up the barrels, but it certainly does ruin the chips."

She had promised Wade she wouldn't complain about the wind, but that didn't mean she'd ever learn to like it. The wind and the loneliness and the vast expanses of nothing were what she found hard to bear. They were her enemies, impossible to reach, impossible to remove.



"Know how far it is to water here?" Wade asked.

"I should. I've gone with you often enough."

"I'll have to beat you yet," he said. "I mean down. Some of the ranchers dug wells. Went two-three hundred feet, they say. It was good water, and plentiful. That means machinery. Can't do it by hand, the way we did back in Missouri."

Always he said, "Back in Missouri." Bethany said, "Back home."

"And once you strike water at that depth," he went on, "you know good and well there'll be no pumping it up by hand. That's where the wind comes in. Windmills. Once we get them, we'll be fixed. Windmills and fences," he said. "And you can't have the windmills without wind."

"I guess I'll get used to it," Bethany said, knowing she really never would. "I guess I'll learn to take it, like I have cooking with chips. Wouldn't it be nice, though, to have water close? Sometimes I get to thinking about how it is at home: A sink in the kitchen and a hand pump in the sink."

Wade looked up, worried.

"Now, how about a little music?" he asked.

He got out the harmonica, and played some gay tunes like "Yankee Doodle" and "Dixie" and "Turkey in the Straw." They filled the little room with happiness.

Bethany made coffee. She poured it into the best cups and recklessly cut the cake she had meant to have for dinner the next day.

After they had gone to bed she remembered about the wind. She hadn't been conscious of it since Wade started playing the harmonica. Maybe it had stopped. No, there it was, moaning around the corner of the dugout. It sounded so lonesome, she felt sorry for it and not for herself.

With the coming of December, Bethany began to think about Christmas. Whatever they had, they must make for themselves.

"We're about out of flour, Wade, and coffee and sugar. With Christmas coming, I thought I'd do a little baking."

Secretly she unraveled her sweater, steamed the yarn over the spout of the tea kettle, and rewound it. Then she knitted it into a muffler and gloves for Wade.

She sent him out hunting for a deer or an antelope. "I don't care which," she said, "just so it's meat." When he came back with an antelope, she made part of it into mincemeat, using molasses for sugar and plum preserves for raisins.

Wade was busy with his own preparations. He rode into the breaks and found a cedar tree. It was small and greenish brown, the trunk twisted by the wind. The smell of cedar brought back Star Hill and home. Bethany had only to shut her eyes and see it all—the sheen of tinsel, the glitter of ornaments, the strings of popcorn and the paper chains. She made paper chains, those decorations beloved in her childhood, from newspapers.

A box and a letter came from her mother.

"I've tried to put in things you can use," the letter said. "A few dress lengths and so on, and a warm shawl. I am afraid you'll be cold this winter. We'll miss you at Christmas, but we are glad you are happy in a home of your own. We'll think of you and you must think of us and know that we will be trying hard to make Christmas just the way we used to do when you were here."

It made her feel very much alone and far from home for just a moment. Then she realized Christmas was here in this dugout, in the little tree she had trimmed, in the preparations she was making. She wasn't going to spoil this very first Christmas of her own by thinking too much about the ones she had known back in Missouri.

Everything was ready by Christmas Eve. Wade went that morning for water, and was gone so long she began to worry a little. Just as her concern reached a sharp bite, he drove in.

"M-mm," he said, coming into the dugout. "Something smells mighty good. Think I wasn't coming back?"

"No, I wasn't worried. You knew I was going to have mince pie for supper."

"I guess that's why you dressed up. You knew I was coming."

She had put on her best dress and set the table with the best dishes. The dugout was warm and bright. It smelled of roast antelope and dried beans and mince pie. The tree looked gay.

"Sure looks like Christmas in here," Wade said, contentedly. "You just hold supper back a minute, while I dress up, too."

Next morning dawned bright and clear. Wade was up first, making a fire in the little stove.

"Merry Christmas, Wade," she cried.

"Merry Christmas," he said, kissing her.

"Now I'm a fine one," he said, when she gave him his scarf and mittens. "And won't these come in handy before the winter is over," he said. "Wait a minute now. Turn your back until I tell you to look."

His gift was ingenuity itself. Somewhere he had got a small keg and made a cover for it and a spigot arrangement. She ran her hands over it, turned the spigot to see how it worked.

"Why, Wade—" she cried. "Thank you, darling!"

"My gosh," he said, "the way you carry on! You women! Lose your minds at the sight of water."

"You try washing dishes in a cupful of water sometime, and you'll understand," she told him.

"I know—" he admitted. "I kept remembering what you said about the pump in your Ma's kitchen—and I got to wondering what I could do about it. Now you can just write her and tell her you have water in the house."

She cooked dinner, wishing they had company to share it. She had asked Butch and Slat, but they refused, perhaps because they felt she and Wade should be alone that day. Just as she was ready, Slat arrived.

"Merry Christmas," she said. "You got here for dinner, after all. Where's Butch?"

"Merry Christmas," he said. "I can't wait to eat, unless it's ready. Butch has gone riding for Doc. Milly's baby is mighty sick. I hate to break up your Christmas," he added, "but me and Butch thought maybe it might help Milly to have you."

"Of course," Bethany said, "but let's eat something first. It's a long ride."

They got to the dugout about the same time Butch and the doctor came. Milly sat in a low chair, the baby in her lap—Tom standing beside her.

"Here, Milly girl—let me have her," said the doctor. . . . "There was nothing I could have done," he told her, at last,

knowing that was what she wanted to hear, knowing she did not believe him.

There was silence in the room. Tom still stood helplessly. The baby had never been quite real to him.

"Wouldn't you like to dress her now?" the doctor asked.

Milly spoke: "I won't have her buried here! There isn't even a preacher or a church. We'd put her out here and she'd be all alone, and afterward we'd have to pile rocks to keep the coyotes away. I won't have it!"

"No reason you can't go to Mobeetie," the doctor told her. "The river's all right for fording now." He turned to Bethany: "Can you go with her?"

"I can," Bethany said.

"It's a long ride to Mobeetie," he reminded them. "We ought to move fast. You'll have to take the spring wagon, Tom."

Tom said, "I'll manage."

"We'll get the horses ready," the men said, glad of a chance for action.

In only a little while Tom came out, carrying a box. Milly followed, looking very young—young as new motherhood and old as sorrow. They helped her into the back seat of the light wagon, and she held out her arms.

"Give her to me," she said.

Tom set the box on her knees, and climbed in beside her. Bethany went to the front seat with Butch, who was going to drive. The doctor was already on his horse, and Wade and Slat stood holding the team, their arms hooked through the bridles of their mounts.

"We'll change horses at the Triple T," the doctor said. "I'll leave this horse and pick up one of mine."

"Let her go!" Butch said. Wade and Slat stepped back.

For a moment the team stood still—they who were used only to the feel of man on their backs—and knew the galling shame of harness, the ignoble fact of a weight behind them. Then they sprang forward, hoping to shake loose their badge of degradation.

It was quicker to go by dead reckoning. Butch held the lines, his young face strong and intent. The three horsemen followed.

The day was crisp and cool. The land seemed hushed. To Bethany the gentleness was more sad than a storm would have been.

No one spoke. When they came to the ranch headquarters, they changed horses.

"I hate to take your horses," Tom said. "We plan to drive pretty fast."

The boss was a huge man, white-haired and beetle-browed. He had come to the Panhandle when there were only a few of his kind and the Indians were still a menace, but everywhere there was grass for the taking.

"I've been out here a long time," he said, "and I've had a lot of horses, but I never saw one yet that was more important than a man—or a woman. Come in and get something to eat before you go on."

They ate—all except Milly. Her throat would not close over the food. Bethany, seeing this, did not urge her.

It was late when they got to Mobeetie. On their way in they passed the cemetery—the few dead lying decently together, as dead are meant to lie. At their graves stood markers, straight and proper.

Sympathetic people and kind took the box from Milly, and she let it go.

"Her name?" someone asked, wanting to make a record of the burial.

Milly hesitated. How could she explain that the baby had no name—that from the first she had known death must be her destiny and that she, Milly, had no right to presume upon the little one's immortality, to anchor her to earth with a name?

"She had no name," Milly said. "We hadn't named her."

The man put the pencil to paper.

"Baby Finch," he wrote. "Age, nine months."

Chapter 7

The good weather held. It grew warmer.

"If it stays this pretty," Bethany said, "I wish we could ride over to see Milly."

"All right," Wade said. "We'll go, but don't trust this weather too much."

Next day he went for water, and she busied herself about the house. About noon she noticed a cloud in the north. Smoke, she thought. Perhaps another grass fire. When she went to the door to take another look, she felt a warning chill. It hit with unbelievable swiftness, that blizzard. Wind came first, and after it the snow in great flakes which filled the air. The cold was hard on the heels of wind and snow, and the sound of the wind was worst of all—like a fiend let loose.

She began to carry wood into the dugout, piling it behind the stove. She led Rex and the cow into the shed. The cow was richness to be guarded; she would have a calf in March.

When Wade came at last, she threw her arms around him. "Thank God," she cried, "you're home! Oh, Wade, I was so worried."

She cooked supper, but Wade ate almost nothing. "What's the matter?" she asked, sharply.

"I'm not hungry," he told her. "My throat's a little sore."

"You got too cold," she worried. "You were chilled to the bone when you came in. Wade, what about the cattle out on the range?"

"They'll just have to take their chances," he said. "They'll manage. Cattle are smart; they drift toward shelter. Horses, now, are more like people."

"How long do you think it will last?" she asked.

"Good Lord, Bethany, how would I know?"

He was worried, too. Mentally, she checked supplies—flour, coffee, meat, beans? Yes, they had enough. Thank heaven, out here you bought for a long time ahead.

The room grew chilly, the cold closing in like a vise. Wade put wood into the stove, but the warmth was a feeble thing, scarcely going beyond the body of the stove. The pile of wood began to look very small. Might as well try to dam up the Missouri River with a fallen leaf as meet the demands that were being put upon it.

Wade read her thought. "I got a wagonful of wood today," he said. "I'll bring it in tomorrow." He shivered a little and drew nearer the stove. She put the red shawl on her shoulders and brought Wade his coat.

He was sick! What if he came down with pneumonia! There was no way to get a doctor in weather like this.

"As soon as the mail goes through again," she promised herself, "I'm going to send for a doctor book and memorize it."

She awakened from uneasy sleep with the consciousness that something was wrong.

"I'm cold," Wade said, shivering. "I think I've got a chill."

She got up, wrapping the red shawl around her. Sixty miles from the nearest doctor, she fought with stark terror in her heart. She covered Wade with all the bedclothes she had. She worked as she remembered her mother working, with coal oil and lard and strips torn from her flannel petticoat. She wrapped hot stovetops in cloths and put them in the bed all through the dark hours of the night. Everything she did was a prayer.

Now Wade burned with fever, muttering hoarsely. She bathed his face, brought him water, tried to keep the room warm. She put on her overshoes and tied Wade's muffler about her head. She kept the coffeepot boiling.

When morning came at last, the wind was still blowing blinding clouds of snow that engulfed earth and sky. Peering out the little window, Bethany could see nothing but snow.

Wade's breathing was labored. She went to put more wood in the stove and saw there were only a few sticks left. She must go to the wagon for more. She struggled with the door—snow held it—then stepped out into a world gone mad.

Wind stung her face and hands and body and cut through her clothes to her bones. It sealed her eyelids, so she walked by instinct alone.

Long afterward, she would say, "Twice I didn't think I would make it."

The first time came when she stepped from the semi-protection of the dugout. No one could stand up in this, she thought. "It's crazy to try."

Inch by inch she fought her way toward the wagon. Sometimes she could see a little, dimly, ahead. Then the snow would close down, leaving her only the memory of the wagon's position. She was an atom, matched against a giant devoid of heart and soul. The wind forced her to her knees. She might as well give up.

A sound roused her. A horse was whinnying nervously. Rex had sensed her presence. She stood up. Wind pushed her along, and her hand touched the side of the little shed.

When she entered, the work horses and the cow received her stolidly. Star was all delight, but Rex was almost hysterical. He jerked his head up and down, reached out his nose to be stroked. She leaned against him, trembling with the joy of deliverance. Rex had saved her life. She rubbed his nose.

Maybe she was nothing but an atom, but she had something the storm could never have—a heart and soul. She had love and courage. She had the will to live. Those were the things that endured.

She broke the ice on the water barrel. She got down feed from the rick. She felt Rex's eyes on her, questioning.

"He's sick, old boy," she said. "But he's going to get well."

Both she and the horse knew it was true.

She went to the wagon and piled her arms full of wood. The trip back to the dugout was easier. Wade seemed a little better.

She made two more trips, piling the wood behind the stove.

She heard Wade's voice: "Stubborn little thing, aren't you?"

She ran and knelt down by the bed. "Oh, Wade, darling, how do you feel?"

"Better," he said, and dropped off to sleep again.

She put in more wood, set the damper. Then she took off her wraps and shoes and, still wearing her dress, got into bed beside him. She touched his face. His skin was cool and natural. She had no more than put her head on the pillow until she, too, was fast asleep.

The stillness awakened her. After the noise that had beat upon her ears for so many hours, this stillness was more real than sound. She sat up in bed, listening.

The room was icy cold. She jumped out of bed to kindle the fire. She measured out coffee and put the pot on the stove. This done, she went back to bed to wait until the room warmed up. She was careful not to touch Wade, lest she waken him.

The warmth from the fire reached her. By and by the coffee began to boil, the smell of it filling the dugout.

Beside her, Wade stirred. "M-m-m," he said. "Coffee sure does smell good."

It was two weeks before they could get out to see the extent of the storm's damage. At first Bethany cared for the stock over Wade's protest, brought in wood, melted snow for water. The second week he took back his job.

"You did right good," he told her, after his first trip to the shed. "Say—you should have seen how glad Rex was to see me."

Some day she'd tell him about Rex. Some day. Not now.

Finally he said, "I think I'll ride out and look for the cattle."

"I'm going with you."

"It's still pretty cold," he objected. "The sun is bright, but it's cold."

"I'll wrap up warm," she told him.

It was good to be out in the open air once more, cold though it was. They turned their horses toward the common grazing-ground, which, because of the fire, was away from the breaks now and farther from protection. Wade seemed to go by instinct, for there were no landmarks left—nothing but a great white expanse with a vast blue dome closing down on it. The cold fused earth and sky into a single piece, with no seam visible.

"Don't look at it too long," Wade advised. "Close your eyes every now and then or you'll be snow-blind."

"There they are," Bethany said, glad that they were found and all right. And then she knew better. For though they stood in the pose of life, there was a look of death upon them. A grotesque caricature of life, more horrible in its realism than death could be. They were statues, figures carved in red marble, frozen and held fast in the snow, with white veins of ice over faces and hides. Some lay on the ground but these, too, lay as if asleep.

The sun shone upon them, illuminating every rigid contour, telling every pitiful syllable of the manner of their death—the ceaseless drifting back and forth, buffeted by winds, numbed by cold, blinded by snow, seeking warmth and safety.

"Our cows," Bethany whispered. "And they were going to have calves in the spring. The ranchers will never miss theirs, but these were all we had," she cried.

"Don't be selfish," Wade said roughly, but she understood. This was a hard thing, and he had to arm himself in roughness, to stand it at all. She could see his throat working, and she turned her head. It would not do for her to see him cry.

"Could be," she heard him say finally, "that a few found their way down to the breaks"—but they both knew that it wasn't so.

Now she could go to him. She rode close, putting her hand on his arm. "Don't you worry," she said. "We'll manage. We're both alive, and that's more important than all the cows that ever grazed on this range."

"Sure," he said. "Sure, we'll manage."

They spoke with a confidence neither felt. Spring would mean another payment on the land. It would mean buying more supplies. Groceries and land payments and interest take money. You say, "We have thirty years to pay for the land," and it sounds easy, but what about those years when you have nothing to pay with?

For several days Wade was very quiet. Finally he said he thought he'd just ride over to the Triple T. Maybe the boss would have some work for him. Bethany knew he didn't want to go. He had been turning the idea over in his mind, rejecting, considering. To ask for work would be an admission that he was as wrong in this farming idea as everybody said he was.

The boss regarded him from under those beetling brows in a way he had of seeming to see right through a man. There was grudging admiration and some wonder in his eyes. He could understand Tom Finch, trying to start a herd of his own. That was a natural thing. He could even understand Tobe Dillon, a dreamer too lazy to work for his dream. But this fellow, flying into the face of things, defying every natural way of the land.

Or was he? The boss was silent, thinking, as if he could look into the future and see hordes of Wade Camerons descending upon the land. There would be no stopping them.

This Cameron, now—he had a sort of stubborn courage you couldn't help admiring. He believed in the land, so he was patient as the land, and strong. He was all for putting something in, instead of taking it out. Maybe he had something there. Anyway, if you got rid of this nester, the race would still go on. It was like the human race. Man, the individual, might perish, but mankind, the race, went on. He liked this fellow. He wished he could help him. But hell, he couldn't give him a job. After the big die-up, it was all he could do to find work for his own men.

"I'm sorry, Cameron," he said, coming out of his reverie. "I don't have work enough for my own boys. But I'd buy some feed, if you had it to spare."

"I didn't much think you'd have anything," Wade said, "but I thought I'd try. And I'm sorry I don't have any feed. Now that the grass is burned, I'll have to give it to my own stock."

He went home to report failure to Bethany.

"Do you suppose he told you that because he doesn't want us out here?" she asked.

"Oh, Lord, no," Wade said, laughing a little shortly. "He minds me like a horse does a fly. And sometimes I think he could switch me off about as easy. No," he continued, "he doesn't mind me, individually. Funny, I could almost feel what he was thinking when I asked him for a job. He just sees me as the first of a crowd who'll come later. I can see his side of it. He came when things were pretty wild. You think we have it hard now, but it's nothing to compare with what he found. And he sort of tamed the country down to where it looks good enough so we homesteaders want to come in and take a slice."

"Yes," Bethany agreed, "I can see his side."

"What he doesn't seem to realize is that in the long run we'll help him. There'll come the day when he'll be plenty glad to have a railroad to ship his cattle over. And when enough of people come, the railroad will come, too."

"They're bound to have a railroad," she said, trying only to encourage him.

"Sure," he said. "That's why we have to hold on to this land. No matter what happens, we've got to hold on."

Quite by accident, she came upon an unexpected source of money. Cold and snow were still on the land, but the sun was beginning to nibble away at the edges of both. She was mending a torn place in one of Wade's gloves while he sat dozing in his chair, when a knock came at the door.

"Why, hello," she said. "Come in."

"Hello. We thought you might have been frozen solid here," Slats said. Then he saw Wade. "Well, you old good-for-nothing son-of-a-gun. Marry you a good wife so as you can sit around and do nothing the rest of your life."

"Oh, shut up and sit down," Wade said, lazily. "I've been sick. Tell Doc he might as well go out of business, because I've brought a real doctor out here."

"I've got some real medicine for you," Slats said. "Piece of beef. Want me to bring it in?"

"Oh, yes!" Bethany cried. "I'll cook us all some." She hoped she didn't sound like a starving person. Meat! That was real food. She hadn't let Wade know how little they had, fearing he would insist on going out to hunt.

She set about cooking the meal, happier than she had been in days. It was good to see anyone—but between them and these cowboys there was a special tie. Together they had ministered to a neighbor's need. Anywhere, that was a bond; here, it was a hoop of steel.

"Have you seen Milly?" she asked. "I planned to ride over, but the storm came."

"Yes, ma'am, we were over yesterday, Butch and me."

"How is she?" Bethany asked.

"She's a right brave little thing," Slats said. Butch said nothing. He stood there opening and closing his hands, looking down at the process as if it were a phenomenon he had never seen before.

"Tom lose any cattle?" Wade asked.

"Most of his herd. I reckon everybody lost some."

"Now you just sit down and visit," Bethany said, changing the subject quickly, "while I get some things cooked."

They sat down. Slats picked up the glove she had been working on. He turned it over in his hands.

"I sure would be right proud to have some like this," he said.

"I'll knit you a pair," Bethany told him.

"I'll pay you good."

"I don't want pay from you, Slats," she told him.

"I said, I'd pay you. And Butch here, he would, too. Only he's too scared to tell you so. Butch, you ought to have your hands froze right off your arms if you're too scared to tell the lady you want some mittens."

Bethany could not be sure whether it was their own need that he expressed, or hers he felt. She would not inquire into that too closely.

"I'll make your mittens," she said.

She raveled up the red shawl her mother had sent. A shawl was nice to have and pretty, but when you weighed it against some good hard cash, the money was bound to win. Not for the sake of the money, but for the things it would buy. Her mother would feel that way, too.

When Slats came back for his pair, he was delighted. He held up his mittened hands, admiringly. "Now ain't we fancy!" he said. He slipped a dollar into her hand.

"That's too much, Slats," she protested.

"For mittens like this? You don't know what you're talking about. When the other boys see them, they'll all want them. Will you make them some?"

"Send them over, Slats," she said. "And maybe you'd better take Butch's to him, too."

"He'd a-come himself," Slats said, "but he rode over toward the Finches'."

"That's good," she told him.

She took the two dollars and looked at them a long time. Then she pulled out the box from under the bed and put them away. Mighty little company they had, but she had never seen pieces of money that looked as big, shone as bright.

With Slats advertising her work, she did a thriving business among the other cowboys until the last bit of the Christmas shawl was used up. She threatened to unravel Wade's muffler and convert that yarn, as well, but Wade said he'd have no Indian giver in his house. Besides, did she want to have to nurse him through another bad cold?

The snow melted. The sun shone. The air was crisp and clear. She wrote her mother:

"We had a bad spell of weather, but it is beautiful now. Wade had a cold, but I haven't been sick a minute. We had a nice Christmas. Wade fixed up a sort of affair so that now I have water in the kitchen. Your shawl was lovely. I can't tell you how much I have used it." (Indeed she couldn't, and that was the truth!) "We stayed in close during the bad weather. Wade read aloud, and I knitted."

There was no word of the frozen cattle or elaboration of Wade's illness. She could not yet bring herself to think too much about the night she had held back the shadow of death.

She started to add a request for yarn, so that she might knit more mittens for the cowboys. She put her pen down, staring into space. That would be asking for help, a thing which she would never do. Aunt Clara said it would be like that—the missionary society would have to pack a barrel for her, like other homesteaders. When you took things, even from your own folks or from kind souls like the missionary ladies, that was charity. And charity was not for Wade and her. They'd work things out some way, and by their own efforts. What was it Wade had told Tobe Dillon? "I'll feel more like it's mine, if I pay for it," he had said.

She looked down at her hands, red and chapped from snow and cold and housework. She looked at her broken shoes, at her dress, faded from much wear and many launderings. She got up and went to the mirror hanging over the tin washbasin. She looked at herself a long time. Then she came back and finished her letter.

"I wish you'd send me some pictures of the latest styles," she wrote. "I want to make up those dress lengths you sent me for Christmas."

When she had finished, she made herself extra tidy, and cooked a good supper before Wade came in, bringing news.

"Saw a cowboy today," he told her. "Said Tom's talking about going up to Kansas to work on the railroad."

"And take Milly with him?"

She thought she could not bear to see Milly leave.

"I don't know. He said she might stay here to hold the claim."

"Milly here alone!" Bethany protested. Milly, so timid she could not even face a prairie dog—how could she stand up to the terror of solitude?

"Well, they have to get some cash money." It was a simple fact, and she understood.

"Would you like to go work on the railroad?" she asked.

He said, no, he wouldn't. He had heard of another way to make money. Newsome told him about it. Newsome would like to try it himself, but his wife carried on something terrible when he mentioned it to her. Said it was the most horrible thing she ever hear of—sounded like a ghoul.

"Say, what is a ghoul, Bethany?" he asked.

"Well," she said uncertainly, "I think it's one who preys on the dead."

"The old gal is mighty close to right, then. It's gathering buffalo bones."

She remembered how her first sight of them had disturbed her. Now, she noticed them no more than any other thing natural to the land.

"What would anybody want with bones?" she marveled.

"Fertilizer and other things. The freighters take them up when they go for supplies. Glad not to have empty wagons. Say they sell good, once you get them to a railroad."

"You want to gather bones?"

"Sure. I'll haul them out to the road and Hud will pick them up when he goes north."

So they set about gathering bones. Wade hitched the team to the wagon, and they drove out on the prairie, searching for their strange treasure. At first Bethany thought she could not bring herself to look at them. She drove the team while Wade loaded and broke up the skeletons, piling them as if they were pieces of wood. Bethany kept her eyes averted. After a while, that wore off. Here was just another example of nature's use of things. About them there was a kind of immortality. The buffalo got his life from the land, and left something behind him that would make life possible for others.

As Wade said, "You can't take and take, without giving something."

She must remember that. You must give more than you take, and that gift must be something that may be harvested long after you are gone.

"Let me help load," she said.

"There's no need, unless you want to," he told her.

"I want to."

She touched one of the bones. The sun had shone upon them, so that they held none of death's chill. She remembered the time Wade had made her touch the chips. How much she had to learn then—how ignorant she was of all the things that lay ahead. She thought of these without regret, wondering if the buffalo, too, might not have been proud had he known his destiny.

"Don't get yourself all worn out," Wade told her. "Stop and rest if you get tired."

"I'm not tired," she said. "This isn't hard."

How could she know that in after years those who followed them would say, "My, you had it hard. I don't see how you stood it!"

Or that she would answer them, "We didn't notice it was hard. We did what we had to."

This she did not know now, just as she did not know that afterward she would say in her heart, "That was our happy time."

They got a load, and Wade drove it off to pile by the side of the road where the freighters could pick it up when they went north. Then they set about collecting more.

"Don't you think we better trade the first load for supplies?" Wade asked her.

"Yes," she said, trying not to show the relief in her voice.

"We'll have a real meal tonight," she gloated when the supplies came, and cooked with reckless abandon.

They got more money for the next loads. Wade put it into the box with Bethany's mitten dollars. It made a comforting click.

Then he went outside and came back with a package.

"It's for you," he said diffidently. "Open it."

She opened it. In the box were slippers—black kid, soft as gloves. They had high heels, pointed toes and cut-steel buckles. They were utterly lovely, utterly useless. Where would she have a place to wear them?

She would wear them—to church meeting in the spring, when the preacher came back. On Sundays, when she dressed up at home. When she called on Mrs. Newsome.

"Try them on," Wade said.

She put them on over her coarse stockings, lifted her calico dress and cotton underskirt so that she might have a better look.

"They fit perfectly," she said in wonder. "How did you know my size?"

"Remember the day we spilled the water and you stepped in the mud and got mad at me for laughing? Well, the print dried, and it was hard as a rock," he told her. "I came by and saw it, and I thought you had a cute little foot and never had any pretty shoes or anything. So I measured the track and said to myself I'd get you some with the first money I had. And I sent the print up by Hud and he got the shoes."

He was like a bashful stripling, apologizing for a valentine, his uncertainty more moving than any eloquence.

The day she spilled the water! Now it was set in permanence. It was set in Wade's mind and in hers, so that it would be a link between them. She would keep the shoes as memory of their marriage, rather than the wedding dress most women cherished.

She cried, "Oh, Wade—they are beautiful."

And ran toward him, the little shoes making soft thudding noises on the rag carpet stretched across the dirt floor of the dugout.

Spring came early that year.

Out of the dead brown of autumn, out of the song of winter, it came edging its confident way into a world of whose welcome it was sure. At first it was only a promise in the air. The grass began to grow green around the cow chips, and Bethany thought it was the most beautiful sight she had ever beheld.

"You darling!" she cried to the rosebush. "You're going to grow."

The calf came, a lively little animal, mixture of its gentle Missouri mother and sturdy range father. It wasn't quite Jersey and it wasn't quite Durham, but it was strong and frisky, and much at home. It was a heifer, and that in itself was cause for rejoicing.

"Think of all the milk and butter," Bethany exulted. "We'll have to get word to Slat and Butch."

"Uh-huh," Wade said absently. He was watching the sky. "You know," he said, "we sure could use rain. Things are getting pretty dry."

"We'll have some before long," she said.

But no rain came. One beautiful day followed another. She was all for planting the garden, but Wade said to wait.

"Don't trust a few warm days," he told her. "Remember, we're better than three thousand feet high here. Besides,

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"we're right in the path of any storm that ambles down from the Rockies."

He set about his plowing and then, when rain came, he planted and fenced the field.

June came, hot and dry, and the sunny days marched by. Butch and Slats rode over. They were mopping their faces, and looked hot and flushed.

"Come in," Bethany called. "I'll give you something to drink."

"Mighty nice and cool in here," Slats said. "I hear they've started surveying for a railroad."

"When's it coming?" Wade asked.

"No way of telling yet. You know how them railroad boys are. They'll put it where they please. All I know for sure is it's coming down the Panhandle somewhere. The boss is fit to be tied."

"Time may come when you'll be right glad to see that railroad," Wade said.

"Could be, but this isn't. Oh, yes—something else. Tom sure enough has gone off to work with the construction gang. Milly stayed, so no one can jump the claim. Least-ways, that's what she says."

"Milly alone!" Bethany cried.

"We look in on her often," Butch said. "Don't we, Slats?"

"Yeah," Slats said. "We do. When we saw she was bound and determined to stay, we told Tom we'd look after her. Otherwise he'd never have left her. But they sure need the money, and she made him go."

By the end of July the earth was packed almost as hard as the dugout floor. Still no rain came. Long since, Bethany had known there would be no garden. She did not let herself worry about it. She had promised Wade not to. Anyway, their real concern was for the maize crop.

By August they both faced the fact that this, too, was gone. The earth began to crack around dead stalks on which there was not even the promise of feed.

She kept the rosebush alive, though, giving it all the water she dared. Wade didn't protest. Perhaps for him, too, the bush was a symbol of their will to live in this land.

"We took Milly a cat," Slats said, on his next visit. "Found one close to the road. Figured someone riding through on the stage lost it."

"Does she hear from Tom?"

"Yes, he's got a job on the railroad and he hopes he'll get home before winter sets in."

"I wish she'd come over here and stay with me awhile," Bethany said.

"She won't come," Slats prophesied. "Looks like she's sort of glued to that place."

After the cowboys had gone, Bethany asked Wade the question that had been on her lips for days.

"Wade, what are we going to do for money?"

"If you mean, are we going to give up this place and go back to Missouri, the answer is no," he said. "Do you think I'd give up now, with the railroad coming through?"

"But that won't be for months," she told him. "Maybe years."

"I know," he said. "The road won't be here tomorrow, but it will come. It may miss us by miles, but it will be in the Panhandle and our land will be worth something. This is no time to turn loose."

"Wade," she began, timidly, "are you still sure this is farming country? Maybe Tobe was right when he said it was just for cattle."

"It is good for cattle. We'll always raise them out here. And maize is right, too."

"What if it doesn't rain?"

"It hasn't rained this year, but that's no sign it won't next year. That's no reason to give up. I can't ask the weather to guarantee that it will be good. I sort of like it better that way," he grinned at her, wishing she understood.

Women were different. They liked things to be sure-like. It was because of them that men had to work toward a measure of security. Only the Tobe Dillons of the world overlooked that. Still, a man couldn't give up his self-respect just because a woman wasn't willing to take a few chances.

Bethany was better about this than most women. She knew a man was free only so long as he had fight left in him, only so long as he did not give up and expect other people to hand him things he hadn't earned. She knew that a man who was not free was less than a man. Maybe she understood better than he thought she did.



"Tobe was right about cattle," Wade went on. "We nesters know that. We'll probably always try to have them, but if we don't try something else we'll be nothing but little ranchers. Same way with maize—that's just another way of feeding cattle. We've got to add something different of our own."

She said, "What is it?"

"Wheat," he told her. "As long as we were so far from the railroad it wasn't practical, but now that's going to be changed. It ought to do well here. Wheat and maize and a few cattle—they'll work out fine."

"I guess so," she said, trying to rise to his enthusiasm.

"I know it's hard now, Bethany," he said, "but if we can just hold on till the railroad comes, things will be better."

"Yes," Bethany agreed. Even she could see that a railroad helped. It sort of whittled down a country, made it man-size.

"Looks like maybe we got here at the wrong time," he told her. "Too late to start ranching, too early for farming. Right now we're sitting smack-dab on the edge of time. It may be a little while before anyone can tell which way things are going to go—but I'm going to stay here and see," he said.

"Sure," Bethany said. "Sure we are."

No matter what Bethany did, Milly's face was always before her. She was a part of the sighing of the wind; she was in the heart of the silence; she was the symbol of goodness that had been overcome by evil.

It was difficult to fix the responsibility for her staying. Certainly Tom could not be blamed, for he had not wanted to leave her alone. Everybody knew that. He tried to get her to go back to his folks, or even to Mobetie, or to make Bethany a visit but she refused.

"I wouldn't leave you, Milly, if I didn't think I had to," he said. "It will be mighty lonesome."

"I know you wouldn't, Tom. And you aren't to give me a thought. Butch and Slats will look after me."

They did, and Bethany went to see her. The cat was in Tom's chair, and when Milly talked to him, he would answer. She told Bethany she had got so she could understand him.

"Why don't you bundle him up in a basket and come home with me for a visit?" Bethany urged.

"I can't leave," Milly said, slowly. "I mean, I mustn't leave. I know everybody wondered why I married Tom—they just as good as asked me. I didn't tell them it was because he wasn't afraid of things. I was afraid of everything. I thought

maybe if I married him I'd learn not to be afraid. I learned a little. And then Baby came. I've thought many times that it was my fault about the baby being so delicate."

"Oh, Milly," Bethany protested. "You mustn't feel that way."

"I know I'm foolish," Milly said, "but that's why I wouldn't leave when Tom went. I told myself I was going to stay right here and learn not to be afraid."

It was Slats who came to tell Bethany—a Slats she had never seen before. His face was old and haggard.

"She's dead, ma'am," he began, abruptly.

"Milly?" Bethany whispered. "Oh, no, Slats. No."

"It was the cat," he went on, tonelessly. "We thought we were doing such a fine thing taking it to her, but a coyote took out after that cat, and Milly tried to shoot it. You know, Tom taught her to shoot before he left. Just as she got the gun up—you know how scared she was of a gun—well, there's no real way of telling how it happened, but the gun went off. Butch saw it happen. He rode up just as it went off. Another minute and he would 'a' got there in time. That's what makes us feel so terrible. Maybe if he hadn't stopped to light a cigarette down the trail—but anyway, he shot that coyote."

"Slats," Bethany begged, "don't blame yourselves. That cat meant everything to her. Milly just wasn't meant to live out here."

"Maybe you are right," he said. "There were four of you women out here, and now only you are left; can't count Mrs. Newsome, because she's going to take off, first chance she has."

"Where's Butch?" she asked.

"He's at Mobeetie. Went over to see that Milly got put beside the baby. And he's going to go hunt Tom and tell him. If you don't mind, now, I'll be going, too."

He did not say "to Mobeetie." He did not need to. She watched him ride off into the distance, and she thought of Milly, who would never be afraid again.

Bethany was busy about the house the morning the Newsomes drove up in the buckboard, one horse limping badly. Mr. Newsome went directly to the corral. Eva looked tawdry and bedraggled—her gloves shabby, her shoes dusty. She had been crying, and had taken no pains to cover up the traces of her tears.

"Oh, do come in," Bethany urged her. "I'll make some coffee and fry some flapjacks. You must be hungry."

"No, thank you. We're leaving this country," she said.

"After what happened to poor little Milly Finch, I couldn't stay. I haven't had a night's sleep since I heard about it. Think of her, lying dead and alone there on the ground."

Although Bethany could not talk of Milly's death, it did not make her feel she must leave the country. It was not the fault of the land that Milly could not learn to live there or that the Dillons had left.

"We're going to East Texas," Mrs. Newsome went on. "Papa has a store there—the biggest store in that part of the country—and Clyde is going to work for him. When I think of the things I've put up with, after the way I grew up! I've never let my folks know how I was living."

Bethany looked around, seeing her home through Mrs. Newsome's eyes, and knew she wouldn't have traded it for all the grandeur this woman expected to find.

Just then the men came walking around the corner of the dug-out, and the two women went out to join them.

"Bethany," Wade said. "I've sold Rex."

He couldn't. Out here a horse was not just a horse. He was a man's pride, his prestige, his livelihood. He stood between him and danger; he made conquest of the country possible. He was a symbol of manhood itself. A man on foot was less than a man. He was a thing to be mistrusted and feared.

Wade looked very young, standing there. Bethany felt older and wiser than Eva Newsome. Wade was the one to guide their destiny.

This Eva Newsome had not learned, did not want to learn. She was taking her husband back to East Texas against his will. Like the voice of the nagging woman the Bible mentioned, she had worn down his resistance until the thing that was left of him was less than a man.

"I appreciate this, Wade," Clyde Newsome said. His voice was a dead thing. "I hope you don't ever regret what you have done."

"I won't regret it," Wade told him.

And then Bethany knew what had happened. Wade had traded Rex for Newsome's section of land. The section with the spring on it.

For a moment a wave of hot resentment flashed over her. He had no right to do this without asking her first. She would have to meet this burden of more land, just as she had helped with everything they had done up until now.

She wanted to cry out, "Oh, no!" but she looked at Eva Newsome, and she shut her lips tight.

Clyde unhitched his own horse, and led his limping animal to the corral. He hitched Rex to the buckboard, Wade watching him, his lips set, making no move to help. Rex looked around, as if to ask what manner of foolishness this was.

"It's all right, Rex," Wade said, putting his hand on the sleek neck. "That's a good boy."

"Well, I guess we're ready," Newsome said, helping his wife into the buckboard. He slapped the lines over the backs of the horses.

"Get up!" he said. "Good-by."

The team moved off, Rex stepping skittishly.

Wade turned to Bethany. "I know you think I'm a fool," he said. "But I couldn't let him take one of the others. I had to keep Star and the other two because they'll work the plow. Rex won't. Besides, I rode him out here for land. I'd be foolish not to let him go when I can get more land for him."

She did not answer.

"It's good land we're getting. Even without the spring, it's good. Just think of it—we have a spring of our own now. We are independent. If we ever want to sell, there's no telling how much more we can get for the land. And with the railroad coming—"

He stopped, intent upon the magnificence of the dream he had. The grass beneath his feet was dry and parched. His best horse was gone; in its place was left a limping thing that might never come back to a career of usefulness. He had two sections of land, where only an hour before he had been wondering how he would meet the payments on one. His cattle had frozen in last winter's blizzard and his crop had died in this summer's drought. Still, he dreamed.

"How are you going to make the payments?" Bethany asked.

"I should have asked you first," Wade said, contrite. "All the time Newsome was trying to talk me into doing it, I knew I should come to the house and see what you said. But I just couldn't."

Bethany looked out across the prairie, saw the buckboard silhouetted against the landscape. Suddenly she was exultantly glad that he had not asked her first. She turned.

"You did exactly right," she said, firmly. "You know I wouldn't have wanted you to come trailing in to ask me. What would Mrs. Newsome have thought of you!"

"I knew you'd feel that way," Wade said. "I knew it, or I never would have traded."

Just she and Wade were left now, and the ranches. The ranches were like time itself, making no move, yet with the inexorable patience of nature seeming to close in on them. Beside the ranches, their holdings were as a drop in a bucketful and they no more than castaways on a pinpoint island.

She was more than ever conscious of terrific loneliness. If only they had a dog, but Wade said no. "Nine out of ten chase cattle or bark like crazy and scare the calves. Some cowboy would have to shoot it. The ranchers are tolerating us; there's no need to do anything to stir up trouble."

It was all so mixed up. He was dead set about fences and plowing, no matter how the ranchers felt, but he wouldn't have a dog because it might antagonize them. It didn't make sense to her. "Oh, but fences and plowing are different," Wade explained. "The law says we can."

Butch and Slats came by. They looked at Bethany's dress and smooth hair appreciatively.

"You look mighty nice, Miz Cameron," Slats said. "Hello, Wade. 'Hear you bought Newsome's section."

"Yes, sort of a trade," Wade said.

"That's what I heard. The boss would have bought that if he knew it was for sale. He'll buy it now. Fact is, he sent me to ask if you'd sell. Said he'd get one of the cowboys to buy it, if you know what I mean."

"He wants you to buy it?" Wade asked, sharp and quick.

"No, sir, I told him I wasn't hankering to get hitched up to no land," Slats said.



Slats had refused! The air in the dugout became friendly and right once more. Slats had brought the message, but he wouldn't be a party to the sale. He knew what the land meant to Wade.

Across the table Wade's eyes met Bethany's. She knew what he wanted, but it was only sensible to sell. There was scarcely any money left in the box. They couldn't go through the winter living off jackrabbits. You can face wind and loneliness better if you have food in the cupboard, money hidden in a safe place.

It was only sensible to sell. They wouldn't have to leave. The boss wasn't trying to get rid of them. It wouldn't look like failure, if they sold.

"What do you want me to tell him?" Slats asked.

Bethany did what she had no intention of doing. She shook her head.

Wade squared his shoulders. "No," he said. "Guess we'll hang on."

"I'll put some food on the table," Bethany said. She told herself she was silly. Here was the chance to make things easy, and she turned it down. No matter what happened, now she couldn't complain. Anyway, the look in Wade's eyes was worth it. She hadn't felt so light and free in weeks.

"Well," Slats said, "I don't know but what you're right. The railroad is a-pushing through. We'll be shipping cattle some of these days. It won't hurt us any, but it's been sort of fun, driving cattle up the trail."

"Once this railroad comes through, there'll be a lot of people coming in," Wade said. "Most of them getting land and wanting to fence it."

"Yep, that's the trouble with a railroad. It's like discovering gold. A lot of people you don't want are bound to rush in, once it comes," Slats said.

"And a lot of people you do want," Wade ventured.

"You may be right," Slats agreed. "Anyway, that reminds me—I heard some news about your friend Poco." He grinned at Bethany.

"He's no friend of mine," she protested quickly. "What did you hear?"

"He went and got himself killed. I reckon you can blame the railroad," Slats said. "He tried to hold up the payroll. The paymaster was a big Irishman who had never heard of Poco, and he said no little—excuse me, ma'am; he said no little person like the one that stood before him was going to take money away from him. So he just ups and whams him with a pick handle."

"I reckon the hardest part for Poco was that the man didn't know him," Butch put in.

It seemed to Bethany that since Milly's death the boy spoke less than usual. "You're right, Slats. The railroad is changing things."

Sure, it was changing things, Bethany thought. It didn't stop for Poco any more than it did for the ranches. It wasn't afraid of them. It didn't even know they were things some people held in fear.

They were silent, turning over the words in their minds, as if looking at the shape of things to come; men in tents of buffalo hide, living by a creek which bore a soft Spanish name. Around the creek grew acres of small yellow flowers. A town would be born, shaped out of the needs of the people who came to build it.

What these four in the dugout did not know, of course, was that the town would be named for the creek—or for the flower—the name of them both was the same.

And the name would be Amarillo. . . .

"Well," Slats said, breaking the silence, "guess we'd better be loping along. Thanks for the chow."

"You're welcome," Bethany told him. "I wouldn't feel you'd been here if I didn't feed you."

"Neither would we," said Butch, grinning.

"Bethany," Wade said, when they'd gone, "I'm glad you didn't want to sell."

"Oh, I wanted to, all right," she admitted, "but I couldn't bring myself to tell you so."

"Same here," Wade said. "I wanted to, in a way, and then I remembered how much we had at stake."

Yes, they had two sections of land covered with brown grass. They had a patch of dead maize, enclosed with a makeshift fence. Guarding nothing, it was, like a poor old dog standing at his master's grave. They had three work-horses and a limping, no-good one. They had a cow and a calf. That was all.

No, not all. They had a spring—and in this country that was everything. And the railroad was coming through.

"I'll think of something," he promised. "We'll manage."

The days went on. He was worried. She ought to be able to say something, but she couldn't. They talked little. And then, without warning, he told her.

"I'm going to have to leave—for a while," he said. "I've got to get hold of some money. Thought I'd ride up north a ways and see what I could find."

"I guess you're right," she said.

"Well," he said, "that's settled. We'll go over to Mobetie and catch the stage. I'll ride Star, and Newsome's horse will take you. I'll sell them, once we're there, and it'll be enough to get you back to Missouri. You can wait until I make some money."

Back to Missouri. Back to Star Hill. Bethany Fulton Cameron, coming back home to stay while her husband looked for work.

"Have you heard?" the neighbors would say. "Wade Cameron got burned out on that Texas claim of his, and Bethany's come home to her mother."

"Like I always told you," Aunt Clara would say. "Homesteaders starve to death unless somebody helps them."

Home to Missouri! Once the words would have been sweet on her ear. Now they smacked only of defeat and failure. She remembered the ruined crops and the dead stock—those things on which their hopes had been built. She remembered the bones they had gathered and the mittens and the scant rations. Those were little things—those were as nothing compared to this new price she would have to pay.

She said, "I'm not going, Wade."

"You can't stay here alone. I won't let you. Remember Milly."

"I'm not like Milly. I can manage."

"I won't hear of it."

"I won't go. You know as well as I do that someone has to stay here to look after the claim and the stock."

In the end, she wore him down.

It did not take him long to get ready. Most of the preparations had already been made during those weeks in which his decision was growing in him. The day came to leave, and he got his things and saddled Star.

"I'll write as soon as I get settled," he told her. "Butch and Slats will look after you. They promised me."

All along she had felt he had something in his mind he couldn't tell her.

"I've got a lot of plans for when I get back," he said, hoping to make his leaving sound like a casual thing.

If his plans were visionary, they at least had confidence and purpose back of them.

"Well, I must be going. Good-by, Bethany."

He took her in his arms and kissed her, quietly, as if he meant to be gone only a little while. And then his arms tightened around her, and he kissed her several times—roughly, so that she knew if she said one little word or let one tear slip down her face, he might not leave her at all.

She did not say the word or shed the tear.

"Good-by," she said. "Don't worry. I'll get along fine."

He left her there, beside the dugout. She watched him ride away; she continued to watch him, waving to him each time he turned to look back. And when he had at last disappeared into the vast reaches of the plains, she went back inside. She threw herself down across the bed and cried for a long time. After that, she felt better. She got up and looked at herself in the mirror, and then she combed her hair and made herself neat.

She had held herself straight and strong until he was gone. She had been brave, and she should be proud of herself. She had not broken down in front of him. She had not told him she was going to have a baby. . . . She was alone.

Loneliness was a strong taste in her mouth, a swirling surge in her heart. There were times when she reminded herself that she need not have endured this—that Wade would have stayed, would have found some way to work out things here at home, if she had told him about the baby. A man would have to stay then, no matter how he felt about it. But always she was glad she had not told him. Once she had taken advantage of him. She was a girl then—young, foolish, thinking only of what she wanted. Now she was a woman and she must try to make up for that other time.

She and Wade had come out wanting nothing but a chance to work. They had not asked for anyone to give them any-

thing—land or seed for the land or money or supplies. All they asked was that the country give them a chance. And what had come to them? Prairie fires and drought and blizzards and deprivation. And separation and loneliness.

It was the stillness that she minded. It came in waves, more terrifying than any noise could be. She braced herself to meet it, restrained herself to keep from running out into the night to meet it.

She knew she must find work for her hands to do, so she took to making things—shelves, a footstool, a table—using the boxes which canned goods came in.

She made herself go through the routine of living. She cooked and tried to eat. Sometimes she could not swallow. The muscles of her throat refused to work.

Butch and Slat came.

"Howdy!" Slat said. "Brought you some antelope. Wondered if you'd cook us a bite. We can't eat that stuff the cook puts out. He's in love with a town gal, and he don't know any more than a spook what he's putting in the chuck. Like as not to find a lobo wolf stewed up, if we don't watch him."

"Sure," she said, the sound of her voice like a rusty hinge on a gate.

She cooked the meat for them, and together they sat down and ate. Her throat worked once more, and she could swallow. The food tasted delicious—she wanted to cry at the wonderful taste of it.

"Sure is good chow," Butch said. "Reckon we could get you to come over and take the cook's place?"

She laughed at that. She had not laughed since Wade left, or for a long time before. She remembered now. She had not laughed since he told her he must leave. She had talked to the horses since he left, and to the cow and calf, but she had not laughed. A lone person can talk to animals or to himself, but he cannot laugh to himself. That action holds a taint of madness.

"Got anything we can do?" they asked. "We got the day off and we're ready to work. We figured to haul some water. Want to go with us?"

"No—I believe not."

She couldn't bear to go to the spring.

They hauled the water. They checked her supply of wood and chips. They gave some hay to the stock. And then they came to tell her good-by, and she thanked them warmly.

After that, things went better. She had got a grip on herself. She mended her clothes, setting fine, neat patches on cloth almost too frail to hold them. She reread "Pilgrim's Progress," surprised how much more meaningful it was to her now that she herself had come through the Slough of Despond. She read from the Bible, setting herself to memorizing a certain number of verses each day. She found Longfellow rather thin brew, beside those two.

She went out to care for the stock, keeping her eyes fixed straight ahead of her. She walked as a child walks in the dark—afraid to look behind him lest the thing he sees be a thousand times more fearful than what he fears. It was foolish, for she had already conquered much.

A strange young cowboy came riding up one day to bring her a letter.

"Slat and Butch, ma'am, they couldn't get off to come," he told her shyly, "but they said for me to bring you this and to see if there was anything I could do for you."

"Thank you," she said, her hands trembling. "No, there's nothing you can do."

She saw Wade's writing on the envelope. Although she had known him all her life, this was his first letter.

"My dear wife," it began, in the curiously formal manner of the time. "I take this chance to write you, hoping the letter will not be too long in going through. I am well, and hope the same of you."

"I must tell you that I did not get work on the railroad. I could have had it, but when I found out how long I would have to work in order to get the money I needed, I knew I could not spare so much time. I need to be back home."

Bethany liked that, reread the words.

"I decided I would come on to Dodge City, and try something I had in mind, but that did not work, either. So I have decided to go on to Missouri. I am going to try to borrow money there to keep us going. They would not let me have it without security in Dodge City."

He had gone back to Missouri—to borrow money.

"I would not have done this, my dear wife, if I had not thought it was the only way. I will come back home as soon

as I can get the matter attended to. I hope you are getting along all right. I think of you a great deal."

Already debt had cast its long shadow across the years ahead. Now he was preparing to deepen that shadow, to make it longer. That he should go back to Missouri to do this made it a thing not to be borne—a thousand times worse than taking a missionary barrel, which was the ultimate disgrace she had yet been able to picture. It was defeat and failure, more visible and sure than wagon tongues pointed east.

She cried, "Oh, no. Wade. No, you can't—you mustn't!"

He might have been standing there before her, so urgent was her plea. And then she knew how foolish she was. He had gone—he was in Missouri. By now, everyone in town knew he had failed in Texas, had come back begging for help, as they all said he would.

"I told you so," Aunt Clara would say. "I tried to tell you, but you wouldn't listen. Just like all the Cameron men."

By now, Brad Bishop, smug and complacent, knew that the boy who had refused to work in his bank to go to Texas had failed.

Rosemary knew.

That was the trouble; she might as well face it. Much as she hated the thought of his borrowing money, she hated more the thoughts that crowded in on her now.

How was she to know that borrowing money wasn't just an excuse for him to go back to see Rosemary? Maybe he had meant to do it this way from the first, had never intended to look for work on the road, to try to borrow money in Dodge City. He couldn't get it because he didn't really want it.

If she had been distressed before, now she was distraught. She walked back and forth, across the rag carpet. She squeezed her hands together until she felt pain in them; she looked down at them stupidly. Then she unclasped them slowly, walked over to the little keg to get her a drink.

With the touch of the spigot under her fingers, reason and sanity returned. Here was visible manifestation of Wade's thoughtfulness. She let her hand rest upon the damp coolness of the beg, felt healing shame in her heart. How could she think such things of Wade? She drank some water and then went slowly across the floor to a chair, feeling as if she had escaped some great, nameless danger.

From the first, Rosemary had cast a shadow across her marriage. Although she was not here, every day Bethany fought her. You can't keep on fighting an unseen enemy. Better to have a thing stand before you, visible and clear in all its terrible proportions, than to feel it, yet never see the thing itself.

It was best that Wade go back and see Rosemary. That wasn't what took him back, but maybe the sight of her would settle things, once and for all. Whatever happened would be better than the way things were now. Better to know a hard thing for sure than to crouch in fear and terror beneath its shadow, every day of your life.

In her heart she had thought that Rosemary was like silence itself—she had seen her face as the image of silence. She must stop letting ideas like that get hold of her. There was someone besides herself to think of. She must be strong and courageous.

She had been going to the corral with her eyes fixed straight on the path. Now she made herself look around. Not much at first—she dropped her eyes involuntarily at the wide nothingness around her. The next day she let her eyes range to the plowed field. By the end of the week she could endure the horizon's rim.

Again it was Indian summer, with a soft and benign gentleness wrapped around the land. The grass might be dry, but there was a brightness upon it, a golden wash of light and beauty. The sky was very blue; the clouds shaped themselves into endless patterns of majesty, ever-changing, ever-lovely. Below them, the earth seemed more comfortably small.

And one morning a strange thing happened to her. She found she could look at the level and limitless land with no sense of pain at all. She thought, "This is different from Missouri. All this time I've been comparing the two of them. They aren't supposed to be alike. This country is like nothing but itself. It's like infinity," she thought. "It's like life everlasting."

The country seemed to reach out, to renew itself so that each mile added more miles; so that every new mile added was, in turn, the seed for other uncounted miles as yet unborn.

She thought, "That is like creation. That is like my baby."

The next day Wade came home.

He came just at sunset. Bethany saw him a long way off. At first she would not let herself believe it, but presently he was close enough so that she knew she could not be mistaken. She began to tremble a little, but she did not rush outside to wait for his coming. She combed her hair carefully, although her hands shook so it was hard to pull the comb through it. But she did not change her dress. This one she had on was clean. She mustn't rush at things. She had held in so long; now was not a time to give way.

He dropped the reins and came to the door, and she went there to meet him. Even as he came, she knew that his were not the actions of a defeated man. He had got what he wanted from the trip. She must make herself wait for him to tell her what this was.

He said, "I'm home, Bethany," and he took her in his arms, and kissed her.

"Yes," she said. "You're home."

"It's good to be back," he said. "I've worried so about you. I worried all the time. I didn't tell your mother you were alone, but I didn't sleep nights, thinking about you."

"How is Mamma?"

"She's fine. You must go back for a visit soon, Bethany. They are lonesome for you."

"I'll go back. How's Papa?"

"He's fine, too."

They were talking little things, holding themselves back from what they really wanted to say. They were feeling around the edges of the matter, carefully, not yet trusting themselves to come to the heart of it.

"The dugout is still the same," he said, looking around him. He still held her hand, scarcely seeming to know he was doing it. "Once I woke up at night, and for a minute I couldn't remember what it looked like. It scared me. I was ready to start back next morning, before I got the money."

She said, her voice strangely thick, "Oh—you got the money?"

"Yes," he said, and now he was down to the core of the thing. "Yes. I got it."

He had got it from Papa, she guessed. That was all right, maybe, and the way things ought to be—all in the family. But she wished they hadn't been forced to take money from her folks. It was sort of like the Newsomes, only in a different way, of course. But if Wade thought that was all right, she'd have to trust his judgment. After all, she was all Mamma and Papa had. If they wanted to help her, it was all right.

"I got it from the bank," he told her.

The words jumped out at her. That meant Brad Bishop. That meant he had to go crawling back to the man who had watched him go to Texas with a sort of condescension. He had to humble himself to Brad Bishop, to Rosemary's husband.

He went to Brad Bishop, which was, in a way, taking something from Rosemary.

"Oh—not from the bank," she cried out, wishing she could stop the words, powerless to do so.

"Don't think I wanted to do this, Bethany," he told her. "Don't think it was easy."

"I know—" she began stiffly.

"But listen, Bethany—it was like I told you. There was just no other way."

She could understand that. You did what you had to.

"I couldn't take it from your folks," he told her. "They would have given it to me, I know. But it had to be a loan."

No—he couldn't take it from Mamma and Papa. Hard as things were, she was glad he felt that way.

"So, I went to Brad Bishop."

"He let you have it?"

"Not at first, he didn't. He wouldn't even listen to me at first. But I kept on. I guess, if you keep on saying the same thing long enough, people will finally listen."

Of course, it wasn't easy. She knew that, just as she knew he wouldn't tell her all of the hardship for a long time. After-while, the soreness would wear off. He could stand it now because he had got what he wanted, but he couldn't talk about it overmuch.

"What did you tell him?" she asked.

"I told him I wanted money to buy cattle and seed and wire. I even told him I'd have to use some for interest and land payments."

"And what did he say?"

"He asked me what security I could offer."

That's what she wanted to know, too.

"I told him I didn't have a darned thing but my faith in the country."

So that was how he got the money. He asked for it in confidence and faith. That wasn't like begging at all; that bore scarcely any resemblance to failure. You couldn't give things to a man who believed in himself and in the venture he represented. You made him a loan. That was different. Brad Bishop was a businessman; he knew what he was doing.

"I told him," Wade said, "that if I hadn't been able to pay him in five years, I'd come back to the bank and work it out. I signed a personal note, and he handed me the money."

"You told him that—" she marveled.

"I was that sure I wouldn't have to," Wade said.

"You won't—oh, Wade—I know you won't!"

He wouldn't, either. She was as sure of that as she had ever been of anything in her life. Because she was sure, she could ask him the next question. "Did you see Rosemary?" she asked.

As soon as she said the name, she felt better. She had been an idiot to stand cowering in fear of it all these months. Whatever his answer was, she would always be glad she asked the question before he brought it up himself.

"Yes. I saw her."

"How did she look?"

"Like she always did—maybe even a little prettier. Except—well, sort of hard-like. I understand she and Brad don't get along too well."

"Did she know about the money?"

Ah, that was what rankled; that was the hard thing.

"I don't know," he said. "Maybe. Come to think of it, I'm sure Brad must have told her. But who cares if she does? Who gives a hoot what Rosemary thinks?"

Bethany faced him, not saying a word, but what she was thinking came through to him. He looked at her searchingly.

"Bethany," he said, holding her so that she really had no choice, "look at me."

She raised her amber-flecked eyes, very dark and intense now, to his face.

"Bethany," he said, "you haven't been thinking—all this time—that I still wanted Rosemary?"

She could not answer. She could only stand there in his arms, trembling, a little pulse hammering in her throat.

"Oh, Bethany, Bethany, darling," he whispered. "I don't. Oh, I don't—" He bent to kiss her, then stopped, as if there was something else he must say.

"I guess I never wanted her really," he said. "I think I stopped wanting her the minute you said you'd come to Texas with me." And then he kissed her. "I thought you knew," he whispered. "All along I thought you knew—that it was you I loved."

Bethany rested in his arms, savoring this moment of joy, tasting the exquisite sweetness of it. In a little while she'd tell him about the baby. There was no hurry. They had a lifetime before them. It stretched out, far-reaching and bright, like the country they lived in.

... THE END

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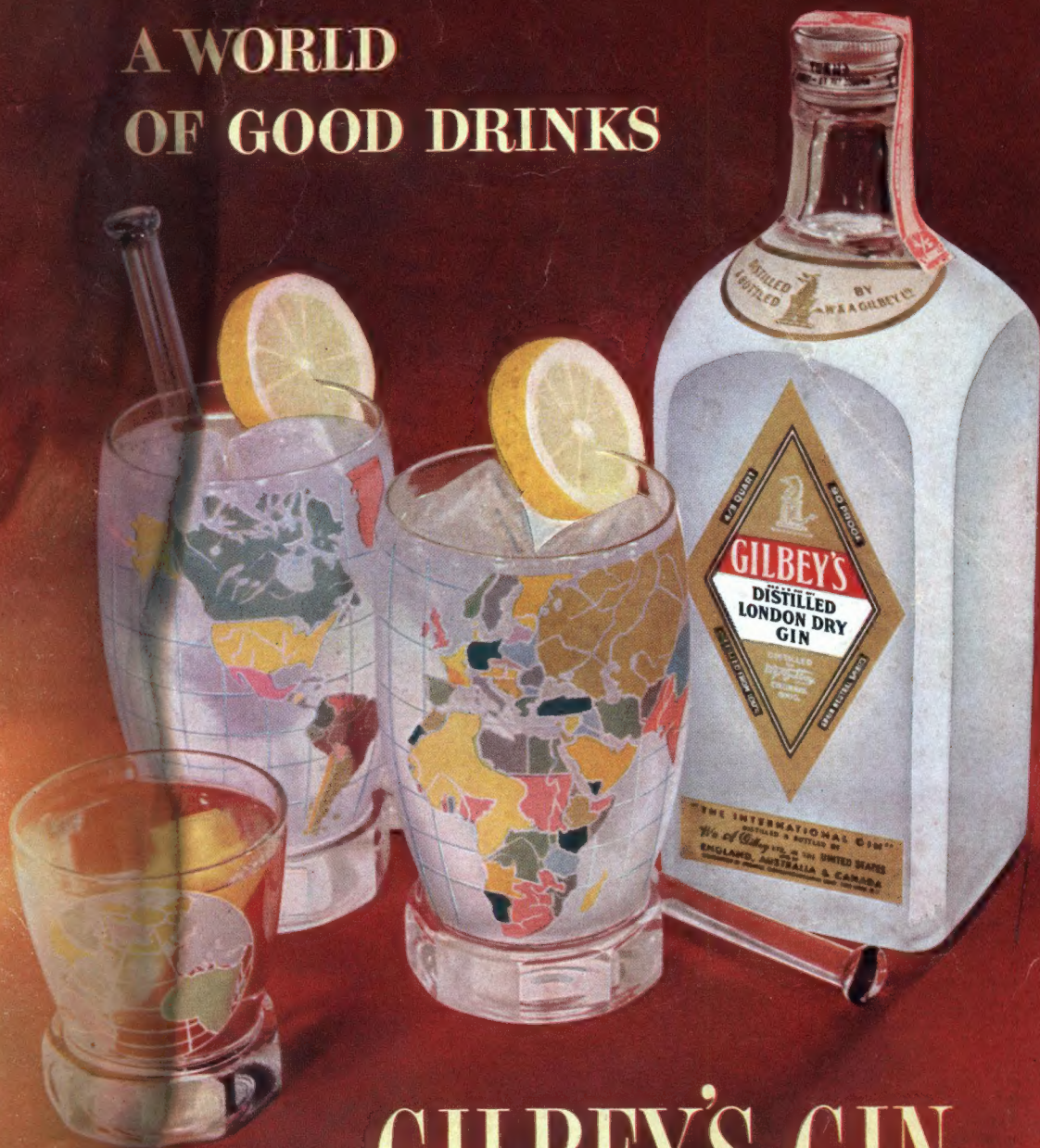
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